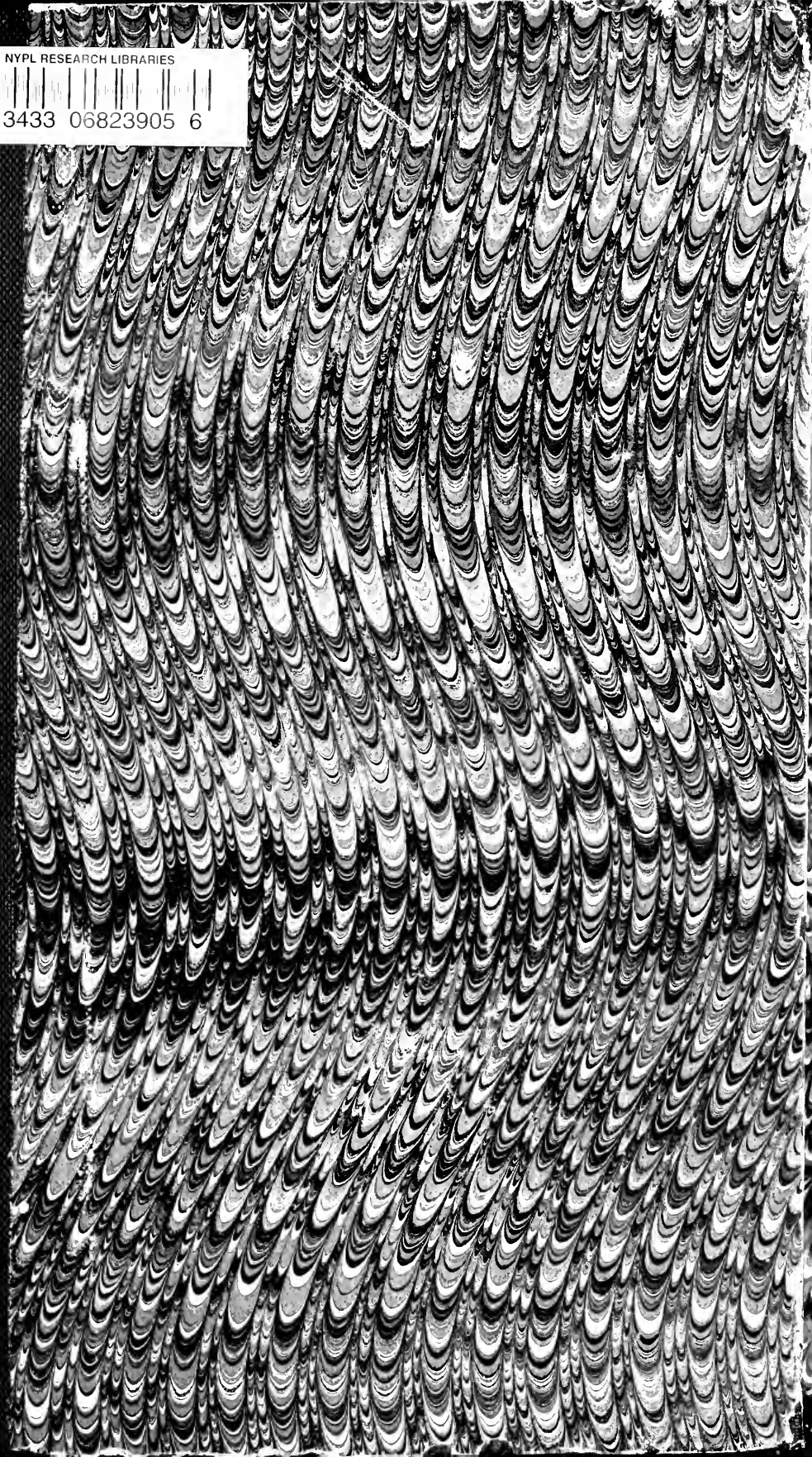


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ELEMENTS OF DIVINITY:

OR,

A COURSE OF LECTURES,

COMPRISING A CLEAR AND CONCISE VIEW

OF THE

SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY

AS TAUGHT IN THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES;

WITH APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS APPENDED TO EACH LECTURE.

BY REV. THOMAS N. RALSTON, A. M.

"Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."—JESUS CHRIST.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE design of this work is to present a clear and comprehensive outline of the General System of Bible Theology, in a smaller compass, and a form less intricate and perplexing to private christians, young ministers, and students of Divinity, than the more critical and voluminous works heretofore published on the subject admit. It is hoped that the appropriate Questions appended to each Lecture will tend greatly to facilitate the study of young persons, and render the work a valuable auxiliary to senior Bible Classes and Sunday Schools, as well as a pleasing introduction to the critical study of Divinity, for junior ministers, private Christians, and young persons in general.

To the preparation of this work, the author has devoted the assiduous toil of several years. He has carefully examined the most reputable human authorities on the several subjects embraced; but has endeavored, in the formation and defence of his opinions, impartially to submit to the guidance of the Inspired Volume.

Should the perusal of these lectures prove as pleasing and profitable an exercise to the young student of Divinity as their preparation has been to the author, he will feel much comforted in the assurance that his labor has not been "in vain in the Lord." Where he has been under peculiar obligations to the labors of others, the necessary acknowledgment is generally made in the body of the work. It may, however, be proper here to

state, that, while many other writers have been consulted, he feels greatly indebted to the labors of Baxter, Goodwin, Howe, Pearson, George Hill, Macknight, George Campbell, Doddridge, Adam Clarke, John Dick, and more especially, Wesley, Fletcher, and Richard Watson.

It is hoped that the extensive Scripture quotations will be found appropriate, and agreeable to the taste of the lover of sacred truth.

Relying upon the indulgence of a generous public, the work is submitted, notwithstanding its acknowledged imperfections, with the hope, that, through the Divine blessing, it may serve as an efficient, though humble, instrument in promoting the love and knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

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ELEMENTS OF DIVINITY.

LECTURE I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THE term GOD is Anglo-Saxon, and in that language it was used, not only to signify the Supreme Being, but also *good*. By this we learn, that, in the apprehension of our ancestors, the Great Supreme was possessed of superlative excellency, so as to warrant the emphatic appellation of *good*.

The Hebrew word in the first chapter of Genesis translated *God*, is *Elohim*, a plural noun, which, according to Dr. A. Clarke, the learned have traced to the Arabic root *alaha*, which means to *worship* or *adore*. Hence, it denotes the Supreme Being, the only proper object of religious worship and adoration. The word in Greek is *Theos*, and in Latin *Deus*, which in those languages signify the Supreme Divinity or Ruler of the universe.

In Scripture He is also termed JEHOVAH, *the self-existent God*; SHADDAI, *Almighty*; ADON, *Supporter, Lord, Judge*; ROCHUM, *the Merciful Being*; and various other terms are used, more or less indicative of his character.

As a brief explanation of our general idea of God, we quote from Bishop Pearson, as follows: "The notion of a Deity doth expressly signify a being or nature of infinite perfection; and the infinite perfection of a nature or being consisteth in this, that it be absolutely and essentially necessary, an actual being of itself; and potential or causative of all beings beside itself, independent from any other, upon which all things else depend, and by which all things else are governed." "God is a being, and not any kind of being; but a *substance*, which is the foundation of other beings. And not only a substance, but *perfect*. Yet many beings are perfect in their kind, yet limited and finite. But God is absolutely, fully, and every way infinitely perfect; and therefore above spirits, above angels, who are perfect comparatively. God's infinite perfection includes all the attributes, even the most excellent.

It excludes all dependency, borrowed existence, composition, corruption, mortality, contingency, ignorance, unrighteousness, weakness, misery, and all imperfections whatever. It includes necessity of being, independency, perfect unity, simplicity, immensity, eternity, immortality; the most perfect life, knowledge, wisdom, integrity, power, glory, bliss, and all these in the highest degree. We cannot pierce into the secrets of this eternal Being. Our reason comprehends but little of him, and when it can proceed no further, faith comes in, and we believe far more than we can understand: and this our belief is not contrary to reason; but reason itself dictates unto us, that we must believe far more of God than it can inform us of."—(Lawson's Theo-Politica.)

I. We will *first* consider the EXISTENCE of God. It is a remarkable fact, that the Scriptures nowhere attempt to prove the existence of God; nor do they pretend to teach it as a truth before unknown, by declaring in so many words that *God exists*; but everywhere take it for granted, as a matter already understood and believed. From this fact we may justly infer, that the *being* of God, in the early ages of the world, was so palpably manifest as to be denied or doubted by none. How this radical and important truth originally became so clearly and forcibly impressed upon man, we need be at no loss to determine, when we reflect on the real condition of our first parents, and the intimate relation subsisting between them and their Creator in the garden of Paradise. In philosophy, it is universally admitted that we derive our knowledge of the material and intellectual universe through the mediums of sensation and consciousness; and that the testimony thus presented is of the strongest possible character. That the clear and satisfactory knowledge of God, possessed by Adam in Paradise, was communicated and confirmed by both these sources of testimony, is fully apparent from the Mosaic history. Man was made "in the image, and after the likeness, of God." Consequently, he was capable of immediate intercourse and intimate communion with his Creator. Thus we learn that he "walked and talked with God." He had familiar access to the Divine presence, and, at the same time, must have felt, within his pure and unfallen soul, a deep consciousness of the Divine existence and perfections. Thus it may be seen, that his knowledge of God was so direct and forcible, that he could no more doubt upon this subject, than he could question his own existence. †

That a matter so interesting and important as a knowledge of the existence and character of God, should be carefully communicated from father to son, through the successive generations from Adam to Noah, is reasonable to infer. But for the better security of this important object, and that the stream of religious truth, which we have thus seen

breaking forth at the fountain, might neither become entirely wasted, nor too much contaminated with error, tributary accessions were, no doubt, derived from the Divine communications with Enoch and Noah ; so that, after the ungodly race had been swept away by the general deluge, and the ark rested upon Mount Ararat, the patriarch and his family could come forth once more, to stand upon the earth, and erect an altar to the true and living God. And thus, from this family, we readily see how the light of tradition might accompany the dispersed tribes, in their devious and extensive wanderings, affording them, at least, a faint glimmering ray of truth, and redeeming them from that gross and stupid ignorance, which, otherwise, might have shrouded in impenetrable darkness every idea of a Superior and Superintending Power.

That "the world by wisdom knew not God," is a Scripture truth, and whether mere human reason, independent of revelation, could ever have originated the *idea*, much less ascertained the *character*, of God, may well be doubted. The wisest of the heathen philosophers have confessed their indebtedness to tradition for their most sublime and important doctrines upon this subject. The most flattering theories of men, with regard to the boasted achievements of human reason, in reference to this matter, must be admitted to be founded upon mere hypothesis and conjecture. No philosopher, in any age, has ever pretended to have acquired his first idea of a God, by a process of rational investigation ; but in every instance where a course of reasoning has been instituted in favor of the being of God, it has been, not to arrive at the knowledge of the fact, as an original truth, but merely to corroborate and confirm a truth previously known and acknowledged. Could we suppose man to be placed in a situation so wholly destitute of the light of revelation, either from tradition or any other source, as to have no idea of God, it is difficult to conceive how he could ever engage in a course of reasoning to demonstrate the existence of that, of which, as yet, he had no *idea*. Indeed, the clear probability seems to us to be, that, thus circumstanced, he would grope upon the earth in the thickest darkness, without advancing a single step towards gaining a knowledge of the being or character of his Creator, till he would lie down in death, like "the beasts which perish." Yet it is clear from the Scriptures, that, situated as we are, encircled by the light of revelation in its full blaze, or even as the Pagan nations generally are, only favored with the dim light of tradition, we may all look up "through nature's works to nature's God ;" and by the exercise of our reasoning faculties, discover in the world around us, a numerous array of weighty arguments in favor of the existence of the Deity.

In turning our attention to the arguments in favor of the *being* of God, we will derive them from *three* different sources :—

I. From *the testimony of the nations of the earth.*

II. From *the testimony of the works of nature.*

III. From *the testimony of revelation.*

I. We argue from the testimony of *the nations of the earth.*

It is a fact well known, and very generally acknowledged, that there is scarce a single nation or people known to the enlightened world, either in the present or any former age, entirely destitute of the knowledge of a Great Supreme Ruler of the universe. “No age so distant, no country so remote, no people so barbarous, but gives a sufficient testimony of this truth. When the Roman eagle flew over most parts of the habitable world, they met with atheism nowhere, but rather by their miscellany deities at Rome, which grew together with their victories, they showed no nation was without its God. And since the later art of navigation, improved, hath discovered another part of the world, with which no former commerce hath been known, although the customs of the people be much different, and their manner of religion hold small correspondency with any in these parts of the world professed, yet in this all agree, that some religious observances they retain, and a Divinity they acknowledge.”—(Pearson on the Creed.)

How, we ask, did this knowledge originate? We see nations the most diverse from each other in their history and character, their manners and customs, separated by mountains and oceans, by burning sands or drifting snows, and holding no intercourse with each other for ages, all testifying, with united voice, their belief in a great superintending Power. How can this harmony of sentiment be accounted for? It is true, we see much diversity in the number and character of the divinities adored throughout the heathen world. Some may maintain but one great Supreme, while others swell the number of their gods to thousands, partitioning out the dominion of the universe among the different members of a numerous family, generally allowing to some one, whether “Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,” a superiority over all the others. Yet, in all this huge mass of inconsistency, contradiction, and absurdity, as seen in Pagan mythology, and idolatrous worship, there is a harmony in one point :—they all agree that a divinity or divinities preside over the universe.

To object to the argument from this source, on account of the errors of Paganism, would be as unreasonable as to deny the existence of a true coin, from the fact that it had been extensively counterfeited. The number of counterfeits would only be a proof that a genuine coin existed : otherwise, how could it have been counterfeited? The number of the

false gods in the world presents a presumptive argument in favor of the existence of a true God: otherwise, how can we account for the general prevalence of idolatry? The only rational solution upon this subject, is, a reference to tradition, and an admission that all nations originally had a common origin; and, previously to their dispersion, were possessed of a system of religious doctrine and worship, which, in their long-continued and extensive wanderings, they have never entirely forgotten. But then we will still be at a loss to account for the origin of the tradition. Whence originally came this religious knowledge?—this idea of a God;—of a superior and superintending Providence? Admit that God originally made a revelation of himself to man, and the problem is at once solved. But deny this, and we may wander in uncertainty and conjecture forever. Thus, we may gather from the testimony furnished by the nations of the earth at large, a strong presumptive argument in proof of the existence of God.

II. The *second* source of argument upon this subject, is, *the works of God, as seen in nature around us.*

From this source, human reason may deduce an argument, which may defy the assaults of scepticism and sophistry. Infidelity, it is true, has long made her boast of reason, and scoffed at religion, as a thing only suitable for the sickly enthusiast, or the narrow-minded bigot. To such vain boasters, we would reply, in the words of Dr. Young:—

“Wrong not the Christian, think not reason yours,
 ’Tis reason our great Master holds so dear,
 ’Tis reason’s injured rights his wrath resents,
 To save lost reason’s life he poured his own.
 Believe, and show the reason of a man,
 Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God.”

Although many truths of revelation are too profound for human wisdom to fathom, yet nothing contained in that inspired volume is repugnant to the principles of sound philosophy and correct reason. In no department of theological science have the powers of human reason been more intensely engaged than in the demonstration of the existence of God. This subject has extensively employed many of the most acute divines; and so satisfactory have been their arguments, that he who can examine the one thousandth part which has been written upon this subject, by the master spirits of the present and last century, and dare to call himself an atheist, may justly be considered as much beyond the influence of reason as a stock or a stone. Inspiration has declared, that “The fool hath said in his heart, that there is no God.” And surely, to open our eyes upon the material world around us, and then

to deny that it is the product of a great designing Cause, evinces the climax of folly and stupidity. We cannot doubt, either our own existence, or that of the world around us. We may ask, whence came we? If we trace our ancestry back for a vast number of generations, we may still inquire, whence came the first of our species? Again, look forth upon the immense universe; whence those mighty orbs which roll in solemn grandeur? Whence this earth; its oceans, and its continents; its teeming millions of sentient and intelligent beings? Every effect must have an adequate cause, and can so stupendous a work exist *uncaused*? Could worlds and systems of worlds have sprung up of themselves? The poet has said:—

“Of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?”

1. We know that we exist, and that the universe around us exists. From this we conclude, that something must be *eternal*. “Had there e’er been nought, nought still had been.” If there be nothing supposed to be eternal, then everything in existence must once have commenced that existence. And if so, the cause of its existence must either be itself or something extrinsic to itself. If it caused itself to begin to exist, then it must have existed before it was, and been prior to itself, which is absurd. But if it was caused to exist by something extrinsic to itself, then, that extrinsic something must have existed before it did exist, and in such sense as to exert a power sufficient to produce other things, which is also absurd. Hence, as something now exists, it irresistibly follows that something did *eternally* exist.

2. That which eternally existed must be a *self-existent* being; that is, no other being could have caused it to begin to exist; for, as yet, no other being could have been in existence; and to suppose that one being could cause another to begin to exist before it had any existence itself, as already shown, is absurd.

3. That *eternal* and *self-existent* being must also have existed *independently*; for that which existed prior to, and uncaused by, everything else, as it was not dependent on anything else for the commencement of its being, so neither can it be for its continuance in being.

4. That *eternal*, *self-existent*, and *independent* being, must also exist *necessarily*. For if it has eternally existed, without having been caused to begin to exist, either by itself or anything else, then it follows that its existence depends solely on the eternal necessity of its own nature; so that it is impossible that it ever should not have been, or that it ever should cease to be.

5. That *eternal*, *self-existent*, *independent*, and *necessary* being, must

also be *self-active*; that is, capable of acting so as to produce other things, without being acted upon by any other being. As we have already proved that there must be something eternal, in order to account for the being of those things which we know do exist, it follows, also, that that eternal being must be capable of acting, or putting forth energy, so as to produce other things; otherwise, no other thing ever could have commenced existence.

6. That *eternal, self-existent, independent, necessary, and self-active* being, whose existence we have already proved, must be possessed, not only of *power* sufficient to produce all things else, but also of *intelligence, wisdom*, and every other perfection necessary for the creation, preservation, and government of the universe.

For, to suppose something eternal, as the originating cause of the existence of all other things, yet, to admit that the eternal being supposed is not self-possessed of every attribute, quality, or perfection requisite for the contrivance and production of all originated existences, would be as far from giving a satisfactory account for the origin of things, as if we were to deny that anything did exist from eternity. To admit the eternal existence of a cause, and yet to deny that it is an adequate cause for the production of the effect in question, is no better than to deny the existence of any cause whatever. Hence we must admit that there exists an *eternal, self-existent, independent, self-active, intelligent* Being, who, by his own unoriginated powers, arose in his majesty, and created all things.

We have, therefore, only to open our eyes upon the grandeur, harmony, order, beauty, and perfection of the works of God around us, and we see everywhere the demonstrations of the Divine existence. This point is most beautifully illustrated by the inspired author of the nineteenth Psalm. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," &c. Mr. Addison's paraphrase upon this Psalm is familiar to every one:—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky," &c.

This is not only one of the most beautiful poetic effusions in the English language, but a masterly argument;—presenting, in its strongest light, and in few words, the entire confirmatory testimony of nature, uttering with her ten thousand tongues,—

"The hand that made us is divine."

The beauty, harmony, regularity, and order in nature's works, attest the divinity of their origin. Behold the beautiful adaptation of all things to each other; the harmonious revolutions of the mighty spheres; the skill and wisdom displayed in the constitutions of all organized beings; consider well the mechanism of thy own frame; see how "fearfully and wonderfully thou art made;" think of the mysterious union between this house of clay and its immortal tenant, and doubt, if thou canst, the being of a God.

"O! lives there, heaven, beneath thy dread expanse,
One hopeless, dark idolator of chance?"

The argument for the being of a God from the works of nature, opens to our view an extensive and interesting field. So that, whether we contemplate the land or water, the surrounding elements or revolving seasons, we behold, everywhere, the deep impress of the Deity; and, kindling with the flame of pure devotion, our hearts should beat in harmony with the enraptured bard:—

"Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who with living flowers,
Of lovelier hue, spread garlands at your feet?
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice:
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sound!
And they, too, have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!"

III. In the third and last place, *Revelation*, with all the force of her authority, declares the being and character of God. It is true, that the force of the evidence from this source will only be admitted by such as acknowledge the truth of revelation. But to such as are not prepared to reject, as an imposture, the record of Holy Writ, the sacred pages furnish the clearest and most impressive demonstrations on this subject. The book of Genesis opens with this sublime announcement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." From the commencement to the conclusion of the sacred volume, through the successive dispensations, by "signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," the clearest possible evidence has been given to exhibit the being of God, and proclaim his dominion over heaven and earth. Thus we may see, that, although the Bible nowhere, in express words, professes to teach that there is a God, yet its testimony in con-

firmation of the truth of that position is impressive and irresistible. In the sacred history, we see the elements obedient to his word. "The winds and the sea obey him;" the earth trembles; and the dead come forth to life, as demonstrations of the being and power of Him who made them all.

Thus have we briefly glanced at some of the most striking evidences of the existence of that great and holy God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE I.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What was the import of the term <i>God</i>, with the Anglo-Saxons?</p> <p>2. What is the Hebrew word rendered <i>God</i>, in the first chapter of Genesis?</p> <p>3. What was its root in the Arabic, and what did it imply?</p> <p>4. What are the words for <i>God</i> in Greek and Latin, and what do they imply?</p> <p>5. By what other names is God called in Scripture?</p> <p>6. What is embraced in our general idea of God?</p> <p>7. Do the Scriptures professedly teach that there is a God?</p> <p>8. Was man originally fully impressed with the being of God?</p> <p>9. By what means?</p> | <p>10. How was this knowledge secured to Noah?</p> <p>11. How may it have extended, in some degree, to all nations?</p> <p>12. Has human reason, independent of revelation, ever acquired a knowledge of the being of God?</p> <p>13. May all nations derive arguments from nature and reason, in favor of the existence of God?</p> <p>14. From what sources may proofs of the Divine existence be derived?</p> <p>15. What is the argument from the testimony of nations?</p> <p>16. From the testimony of nature?</p> <p>17. From the testimony of revelation?</p> |
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LECTURE II.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

IN this lecture, we propose to consider the ATTRIBUTES or PERFECTIONS of the Divine Being. God is infinite, but man is finite; hence we may infer, at once, that it is impossible for us thoroughly to comprehend Jehovah. That which comprehends must be greater than that which is comprehended. But God is infinitely superior to all created intelligences; therefore it is impossible that any should thoroughly comprehend his nature. The incomprehensibility of God was admitted by the heathen philosophers, as is beautifully shown in the history of Simondes. This philosopher being asked by his prince, "What is God?" demanded first a day, then a week, then a month, to consider the subject; but, finally, left the question unanswered, declaring that "the more he examined the subject, the more he was convinced of its incomprehensibility."

Our imbecility on this subject is forcibly portrayed by Zophar, in the eleventh chapter of the book of Job. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

To comprehend the Divine essence is impossible. All we can do is, to consider his attributes, so far as he has been pleased to reveal them to man. In this sense of the word, it is both our privilege and duty to "acquaint ourselves with him."

By many divines, the attributes of God have been divided into different classes. They have been considered as *Absolute* or *Relative*; *Positive* or *Negative*; *Natural* or *Moral*; and *Communicable* or *Incommunicable*. But these divisions we consider unnecessary, and, at least, of questionable propriety; for it may be doubted whether one attribute is more *natural* than another; and whether all are not *communicable* in the same sense in which any are. Therefore, we shall adopt no classification whatever.

Before we enter particularly into the discussion of the several attributes, we would remark, that the Divine nature is not to be understood as divided into separate and distinct parts; but all the attributes are to

be considered as pertaining fully, and at the same time, to the one undivided essence. Nor are we to suppose that there is any discrepancy between them. By no means. The Divine *justice* and *mercy* cannot be opposed to each other; but all the attributes of God are united in the most perfect harmony.

In the presentation of a list of the Divine attributes, it will appear that their number may be increased or diminished, accordingly as we are general or minute in our division; and, after all, we cannot say that we have a perfect knowledge even of their number. For who can tell what properties may belong to the Divine nature, of which Heaven has not seen fit to make any revelation to us, and of which we can form no conception? Therefore, all at which we shall aim is, to present a faint outline of the Divine perfections, as we find them delineated in the Holy Scriptures. The following are therein clearly portrayed, viz.:—

I. *Unity*. II. *Spirituality*. III. *Eternity*. IV. *Omniscience*. V. *Omnipotence*. VI. *Omnipresence*. VII. *Immutability*. VIII. *Holiness*. IX. *Truth*. X. *Justice*. XI. *Goodness*.

I. **UNITY.** That there is but **ONE** God, is clearly revealed in the following passages:—Isa. xlv. 21, 22. “There is no God else *beside me*. I am God, and there is *none else*.” Deut. vi. 4. “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is *one* Lord;” and iv. 35. “The Lord he is God; there is *none else beside him*.” Ps. lxxxvi. 10. “For thou art great, and doest wondrous things; thou art *God alone*.” 1 Cor. viii. 4. “There is none other God but *one*.” Eph. iv. 6. “*One* God and Father of all.” 1 Cor. viii. 6. “But to us there is but *one* God.”

The *Unity* of God, a doctrine so essential to the true worship, is thus distinctly and repeatedly declared. A plurality of gods is the leading error of Paganism. When once the vessel is launched forth from the safe moorings of eternal truth, how wildly will she toss upon the sea of error and delusion! Thus, when the heathen nations gave up the unity of God, how soon did they plunge into the dark gulf of polytheism! “They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Well has the apostle said, “Their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” For surely, reason, if not woefully perverted, would say, there can be but *one* Great Supreme.

II. **SPIRITUALITY.** That the Divine essence is purely *spiritual*, is a doctrine clearly revealed. In John iv. 24, it is declared, that “God is a Spirit.” 2 Cor. iii. 17. “Now the Lord is that Spirit.” These passages sufficiently establish the spirituality of the Divine essence.

But how infinitely does the refined purity of his spiritual nature transcend the utmost grasp of finite minds ! Who can analyze this spiritual essence ?

III. ETERNITY, or Duration without beginning or end, is set forth as an attribute of God. Ps. xc. 2. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even *from everlasting to everlasting*, thou art God." Ps. cii. 24—27. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days : *thy years are throughout all generations*. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but *thou shalt endure* ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and *thy years shall have no end*." Isa. lvii. 15. "For thus saith the high and lofty ONE that *inhabiteth eternity*." 1 Tim. vi. 16. "Who only hath *immortality*." Deut. xxxiii. 27. "The *eternal* God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." 1 Tim. i. 17. "Now unto the King *eternal, immortal*, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Ps. cvi. 48. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel *from everlasting to everlasting*." Isa. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the *everlasting God*, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ?"

The above passages abundantly exhibit the eternity of the Deity. In the contemplation of this attribute, we are overwhelmed with the immensity of the subject. Everything around us, all that we behold, once had a beginning ; the earth, the sea, the mountains and hills, yea, the angels themselves, are but of yesterday compared with God. Of him only may it be said, that *he always was*. Let imagination take her boldest sweep into that eternity which was, yet she never can reach the period in which God did not exist. Then let her whirl upon her lofty wing, and dart with the velocity of thought, for millions upon millions of ages, into the immeasurable range of eternity, *a posteriori*, but she never can reach the period in which God will cease to be. In an emphatic sense, applicable to no creature, may it be said, that *God is eternal*.

The voice of reason abundantly corroborates revelation upon this subject. For, had not God existed from all eternity, it would have been impossible for his existence ever to have commenced. There could have been no originating cause ; and an effect without a cause is unphilosophical and absurd. If anything now exists, something must have been *eternal* ; but we are assured of the present existence of things, therefore reason irresistibly concludes that *God is eternal*.

IV. OMNISCIENCE. This essential attribute is forcibly presented in the following passages. Heb. iv. 13. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*" Acts xv. 18. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Ps. cxxxix. 1—4. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, *thou knowest it altogether.*" Ps. cxxxix. 12. "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. "For the Lord *searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.*" Ps. cxlvii. 5. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: *his understanding is infinite.*"

Thus we perceive clearly that God possesses the attribute of knowledge in the highest possible perfection. With him there can be nothing difficult;—nothing mysterious; but all things are alike plain to his understanding, and open to his view.

This perfect knowledge is restricted to no particular part of his dominions, but extends alike to heaven, earth, and hell; yea, throughout the illimitable bounds of immensity. Nor may we suppose that it is applied only to things which, according to the judgment of finite capacities, are of consequence and importance. It extends to all things, great and small. The insect, as well as the angel, is perfectly known in all its mysterious organization, and minute history.

The infinite knowledge of God not only comprehends everything, great and small, whether animate or inanimate, material or immaterial, throughout the immensity of space, but also throughout the infinite periods of duration. All things, past and future, are just as clearly seen, and as fully comprehended, by the omniscient God, as the plainest events of the present.

Again; this knowledge is not to be considered as having a *possible* existence in some things, and an *actual* existence in others, accordingly as they may be deemed more or less important, so as to deserve, or not deserve, the Divine attention; but, in all cases, it is an *actually existing* knowledge. Indeed, the *power to know*, and *knowledge* itself, are quite distinct things. The former constitutes no part of the attribute of omniscience, but is properly embraced under the attribute of omnipotence. Therefore, to say that God does not actually know all things but, in reference to some things, only possesses the power to know them without choosing to exercise that power, would be plainly to deny Him the perfection of omniscience.

Again, the knowledge of Deity must be understood perfectly to accord with the things known, not only in reference to their nature, but also in reference to the period of their existence. He sees and knows things as they *are*, whether present, past, or future; and not as they *are not*. Thus, to suppose that he sees and knows past events as future, or future events as past, would be absurd. And it would seem equally absurd, to suppose that he sees or knows either past or future events as present, when they are not so in fact. It is true, that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." The past and the future are seen with as much clearness as the present; but to say that they are seen as present, when in fact they are not present, would imply that God does not see and know things as they really are; and, consequently, that his knowledge is imperfect. The sentiment that "with God there is one ETERNAL NOW," if it be understood to mean only, that present, past, and future, are all seen at the same time with equal clearness, is both rational and scriptural; but if it be understood to imply, that with Deity past, present, and future, are all the same, and that duration, with him, is essentially different in itself from what it is with us, and does not flow on in a regular succession of periods, the idea is either unintelligible or absurd.

Once more; the knowledge of God, although it has no influence upon the nature of things, so as to render that necessary which would otherwise be contingent, yet it sees them as they are; — necessary events as necessary, and contingent events as contingent. But in reference to contingent events, we are not to infer any imperfection in the Divine prescience. For while God sees that an event, because he has made it contingent, may take place or not, according to the circumstances upon which the contingency turns, yet the Divine penetration darts through the maze of contingencies, and knows certainly whether the event will take place or not, and all about the circumstances by which it shall be determined.

Thus we conclude, from Scripture and reason, that the great Creator of all sees the end from the beginning, and possesses knowledge in absolute perfection.

Upon the Divine prescience of contingent events, we subjoin the following remarks from Mr. Watson: — "The great fallacy in the argument, that the certain prescience of a moral action destroys its contingent nature, lies in supposing that contingency and certainty are the opposites of each other. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that a word which is of figurative etymology, and which consequently can only have an ideal application to such subjects, should have grown into common use in this discussion, because it is more liable, on that account, to present

itself to different minds under different shades of meaning. If, however, the term *contingent*, in this controversy, has any definite meaning at all, as applied to the moral actions of men, it must mean their *freedom*, and stands opposed, not to *certainty*, but to *necessity*. A free action is a voluntary one; and an action which results from the choice of the agent is distinguished from a necessary one in this, that it might not have been, or have been otherwise, according to the self-determining power of the agent. It is with reference to this specific quality of a free action that the term contingency is used,—*it might have been otherwise*; in other words, it was not necessitated. Contingency in moral actions is, therefore, their *freedom*, and is opposed, not to *certainty*, but to necessity. The very nature of this controversy fixes this as the precise meaning of the term. The question is not, in point of fact, about the certainty of moral actions, that is, whether they *will* happen or not, but about the nature of them, whether free or constrained, whether they *must* happen or not. Those who advocate this theory care not about the certainty of actions, simply considered, that is, whether they will take place or not; the reason why they object to a certain prescience of moral actions is, that they conclude that such a prescience renders them *necessary*. It is the quality of the action for which they contend, not whether it will happen or not. If contingency meant uncertainty,—the sense in which such theorists take it,—the dispute would be at an end. But though an uncertain action cannot be foreseen as certain, a free, unnecessitated action may; for there is nothing in the knowledge of the action, in the least, to affect its nature. Simple knowledge is, in no sense, a cause of action, nor can it be conceived to be causal, unconnected with exerted power; for mere knowledge, therefore, an action remains free or necessitated as the case may be. A necessitated action is not made a voluntary one by its being foreknown; a free action is not made a necessary one. Free actions foreknown will not, therefore, cease to be contingent. But how stands the case as to their certainty? Precisely on the same ground. The certainty of a necessary action, foreknown, does not result from the knowledge of the action, but from the operation of the necessitating cause; and, in like manner, the certainty of a free action does not result from the knowledge of it, which is no cause at all, but from the voluntary cause, that is, the determination of the will. It alters not the case in the least, to say that the voluntary action might have been otherwise. Had it been otherwise, the knowledge of it would have been otherwise; but as the will, which gives birth to the action, is not dependent upon the previous knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the action upon foresight of the choice of the will, neither the will nor the act is controlled by the knowledge, and the action, though foreseen, is still free or contingent.

“The foreknowledge of God has, then, no influence upon either the freedom or the certainty of actions, for this plain reason, that it is *knowledge*, and not *influence*; and actions may be certainly foreknown, without their being rendered necessary by that foreknowledge. But here it is said, if the result of an absolute contingency be certainly foreknown, it *can* have no other result, it *cannot* happen otherwise. This is not the true inference. It *will* not happen otherwise; but, I ask, why *can* it not happen otherwise? *Can* is an expression of potentiality; it denotes power or possibility. The objection is, that it is not possible that the action should otherwise happen. But why not? What deprives it of that power? If a necessary action were in question, it could not otherwise happen than as the necessitating cause shall compel; but then that would arise from the necessitating cause solely, and not from prescience of the action, which is not causal. But if the action be free, and it enter into the very nature of a voluntary action to be unconstrained, then it might have happened in a thousand other ways, or not have happened at all; the foreknowledge of it no more affects its nature in this case than in the other. All its potentiality, so to speak, still remains, independent of foreknowledge, which neither adds to its power of happening otherwise, nor diminishes it. But then we are told, that the prescience of it, in that case, must be uncertain; not unless any person can prove, that the Divine prescience is unable to dart through all the workings of the human mind, all its comparison of things in the judgment, all the influences of motives on the affections, all the hesitations and haltings of the will, to its final choice. ‘*Such knowledge is too wonderful for us,*’ but it is the knowledge of him who understandeth the thoughts of man afar off.”—(Watson’s Institutes.)

V. OMNIPOTENCE. Perhaps no attribute of God is more gloriously exhibited in the Scriptures than this. That the Divine power is *infinite*, is clearly seen in the first chapter of Genesis, where the stupendous work of creation is presented. To create something out of nothing, is a work which none but Omnipotence can perform. How wonderful then the power of God, by which, at a word, he called into being, not only this earth with all it contains, but perhaps millions of worlds, and systems of worlds, that now roll in their respective spheres, throughout the immensity of space! In further tracing the illustrations of this attribute, as contained in the Scriptures, we would notice the following passages:—1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. “Thine, O Lord, is the *greatness, and the power*, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power

and might; and in thine hand it is, to make great, and to give strength unto all." Job xxvi. 14. "But the thunder of his power who can understand?" Ps. lxii. 11. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." Jer. x. 12, 13. "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." Hab. iii. 3—6. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand, and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting." Gen. xxxv. 11. "And God said unto him, I am God Almighty."

Thus we see how clearly the Scriptures exhibit the omnipotence of God. This, as well as all the other attributes, is possessed in the highest possible perfection. And we understand hereby, that God is able to do all things which can be effected by omnipotent power. But, at the same time, all the attributes harmonize, and infinite power can never be exercised so as to perform what implies a contradiction in itself, or what is inconsistent with the Divine nature; but this implies no imperfection in this attribute, but rather exhibits its superlative excellency.

VI. OMNIPRESENCE. The declarations of Scripture, in proof and illustration of this attribute, are at once clear and sublime. Ps. cxxxix. 7, 10. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Prov. xv. 3. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Jer. xxiii. 24. "Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Isa. lxvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." 2 Chron. vi. 18. "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built." Amos ix. 2, 3. "Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide them-

selves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." Acts xvii. 28. "For in him we live and move and have our being." Eph. i. 23. "The fulness of him that filleth all in all."

The above are sufficient to show, that God is everywhere present at the same time. As one has expressed it, "His centre is everywhere, and his circumference nowhere." This attribute seems, in the very nature of things, to be essential to the Divine character; for, without it, we do not see how the infinite power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes, could be exercised; and perhaps it was their ignorance of the Divine ubiquity which first led the heathen nations into the superstitions of polytheism. How incomprehensible is this, as well as all the other attributes of God! We can be present at but one place at the same time; nor, so far as we can judge from reason and revelation, can any created intelligence occupy, at the same time, two separate and distinct positions in space. Fallen spirits, holy angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect," may pass with the velocity of thought from world to world; but we have no evidence that there is any but the *One* omnipresent Being.

VII. IMMUTABILITY. That God is possessed of this attribute, is taught in the following texts:—Mal. iii. 6. "For I am the Lord, I *change not*." James i. 17. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is *no variableness*, neither *shadow of turning*." Ps. cii. 27. "But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall have no end." Heb. i. 12. "But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall not fail."

By the unchangeableness of God, as thus taught, we are to understand that all his attributes continue invariable. What he is now, in his own essential nature, he ever has been, and ever will be. But this does not imply that he may not change his dispensations towards men. Indeed, the unchangeableness of God itself requires that his dealings with his creatures should so vary, as to correspond with the condition of different nations and individuals, and of the same nation or individual at different times. Thus, he may look with complacency upon the returning sinner, with whom he was offended during his rebellion, while the apostate, who once shared his smiles, is now the object of his holy displeasure.

The immutability of God seems necessarily to result from the perfection of his character. As all his attributes are infinite, it is clear that they cannot be increased in perfection. They could not suffer diminution or deterioration without the destruction of his Godhead; consequently, they must forever continue the same.

VIII. HOLINESS, or MORAL PURITY. That God is a being of spotless purity or holiness, appears from the following passages:—Hab. i. 13. “Thou art of *purser* eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity.” Job xxv. 5. “Yea, the stars are *not pure* in his sight.” Job iv. 17, 18. “Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.” 1 Pet. i. 16. “Be ye *holy*, for I am *holy*.” Isa. vi. 3. “*Holy, holy, holy*, is the Lord of hosts.” Rev. iv. 8. “And they rest not day and night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy* Lord God Almighty.” Ps. lxxi. 22. “Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou *Holy One* of Israel.”

IX. TRUTH. This attribute appears from the following passages:—In Exodus xxxiv. 6, God is said to be “abundant in goodness and *truth*.” Ps. cxvii. 2. “The *truth* of the Lord endureth forever.” Numbers xxiii. 19. “God is not a man that he should *lie*, neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Titus i. 2. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that *cannot lie*, promised before the world began.” Heb. vi. 18. “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God *to lie*,” &c. Rom. iii. 4. “Yea, let God be *true*, but every man a liar.” Ps. cxix. 160. “Thy word is *true* from the beginning.” Deut. xxxii. 4. “A God of *truth*, and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

The purity of the true religion is gloriously exhibited in contrast with the lying vanities of Paganism. While, in heathen systems of worship, we see nothing but vanity, deception, and falsehood, we find revealed in the Bible a God whose nature is truth, and a system of worship composed of truth, without any mixture of falsehood or error. This attribute harmonizes with all the others; for as God is *pure*, and *just*, and *good*, he can never deceive his creatures, or permit his word to fail.

X. JUSTICE. That God possesses this attribute in absolute perfection, is seen from the following passages:—Ps. lxxxix. 14. “*Justice* and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.” Isa. xlv. 21. “There is no God else besides me, a *just* God, and a Saviour: there is none besides me.” Zeph. iii. 5. “The *just* Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity.” Rom. iii. 26. “That he might be *just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

That God is just, appears from the entire history of the Divine administration, as presented in the Bible. Indeed, the preservation of the principles of justice untarnished is essential to the maintenance of the Divine government over the intelligent universe. And should short-sighted mortals, in any instance, fancy an apparent failure in the preservation of the Divine justice, in this world, we may rest assured, that

the future judgment "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness," and fully "justify the ways of God to men."

XI. GOODNESS, MERCY, LOVE, or BENEVOLENCE. This is one of the most interesting and endearing attributes of the Divine Being. Perhaps its glorious exhibition in the Divine administration to man, has been the most thrilling theme that ever engaged the contemplation of angelic minds. It is clearly exhibited in the following Scriptures:—Numb. xiv. 18. "The Lord is long-suffering, and of *great mercy*." Ps. ciii. 17 "But the *mercy* of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Ps. cvi. 1. "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is *good*; for his *mercy* endureth forever." In the 136th Psalm, it is twenty-six times declared that "the *mercy* of the Lord endureth forever." In 2 Cor. i. 3, God is called "the Father of mercies."

Many more passages might be added on this subject, but the above are sufficient. Only we would remark, that it is emphatically said, "*God is Love*." This perfection appears to be identified with the very essence of the Deity. All the other attributes, when properly understood, perfectly harmonize with this. Neither truth, justice, nor holiness, can incline the Almighty in opposition to love. Indeed, all the attributes may be resolved into, and made perfectly to correspond with, love. But after all our researches, how imperfect is our knowledge of God! We are constrained to exclaim, "Lo! these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE II.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Can we comprehend the nature of God?</p> <p>2. Is it our duty to endeavor to gain a knowledge of the Divine character?</p> <p>3. To what extent should we carry our efforts?</p> <p>4. How have the attributes of God been classed?</p> <p>5. Is this classification important?</p> <p>6. Are any of the Divine attributes opposed to each other?</p> <p>7. Are we assured that we have some knowledge of all the attributes of God?</p> <p>8. What attributes of God are portrayed in the Scriptures?</p> <p>9. What is the import, and what are the proofs, of the attribute of Unity?</p> <p>10. Eternity?</p> <p>11. What Scriptures establish the Divine Omniscience?</p> | <p>12. Does God absolutely and certainly foreknow all things?</p> <p>13. In what sense is it proper to say, that with God there is <i>one eternal now</i>?</p> <p>14. Does the foreknowledge of God render future events <i>necessary</i>, which, if not foreknown, would be <i>contingent</i>?</p> <p>15. What is the import, and what are the proofs, of the attribute of Omnipotence?</p> <p>16. Omnipresence?</p> <p>17. Immutability?</p> <p>18. Holiness?</p> <p>19. Truth?</p> <p>20. Justice?</p> <p>21. Goodness?</p> <p>22. Can we thoroughly comprehend these attributes?</p> <p>23. What attribute is said most fully to define the Divine character?</p> |
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LECTURE III.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

THE term Christ is from the Greek *Χριστος*, which means *anointed*, coming from the verb *ΧΡΙΩ*, *to anoint*. It is an appellation now universally appropriated to Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world, and Author of the Christian religion.

That this illustrious personage was possessed of proper *humanity*, having assumed our nature, sin only excepted, is a position clearly set forth in the Scriptures, and very generally admitted. In proof of this doctrine, we might appeal to the entire personal history of our Saviour, as well as to those numerous passages of Scripture in which he is styled *man*, or the *Son of man*.

But the object of this lecture is to treat especially of the DIVINITY OF CHRIST, which relates to another nature, entirely distinct from the humanity. By the *Divinity of Christ* we here mean the *Godhead*, in the proper and supreme sense of the term.

With regard to the character of Christ, three distinct views have been adopted, known as the Socinian, the Arian, and the Trinitarian theories. Socinus taught that the Saviour commenced his existence when he was born of the Virgin, and, consequently, that he was a mere man, though possessed of extraordinary sanctity and excellence. Arius taught that he was the first and the most exalted being God ever produced, but still, that he was *created*. Whereas, Trinitarians hold that he possesses two distinct natures; — the *humanity*, which was born of the Virgin, and crucified on the cross, and the *Divinity*, which was united with the humanity, and was very and eternal God, in essence equal and one with the Father.

The plain question which we would now consider is this: — *Is Jesus Christ truly and properly God?* The affirmative of the question we believe to be the Scripture truth, and we proceed to establish it by an appeal to the Holy Oracles.

The scriptural arguments on this subject we deduce from four different sources; viz.: I. The *Titles*. II. The *Attributes*. III. The *Works*; and, IV. The *Honors* ascribed to Christ. To each of these we will attend in the order here presented.

I. TITLES of Christ. These, we think, as presented in the Scriptures, are so exalted, that they can properly apply to none but God, and, consequently, they demonstrate the proper Deity of Christ.

1. *Jehovah*. If it can be shown that this sacred and exalted name is in the Scriptures applied to Christ, it will amount to an irresistible proof of his real and proper Divinity. First, let us notice the superior dignity of the title. As we see, from the third chapter of Exodus, this was the peculiar and appropriate name of God, which was first revealed unto Moses from the bush, and is there rendered in our version, "*I am that I am*." Josephus informs us, that this name was so peculiarly sacred and holy, that his religion did not permit him to pronounce it. This word, *Jehovah*, has ever been considered by the Jews as the highest appellation of the Supreme God; and God himself claims it as his own peculiar name. We shall now see that it is applied to Christ. In Isa. xl. 3, we read as follows:—"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Here, in the original, is found the word *Jehovah*. Now let us turn to Matt. iii. 3, and we find this passage quoted, and applied to Jesus Christ. "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Again, in 1 Cor. x. 9, we read, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." Here we have the testimony of the apostle, that the person tempted by the fathers in the wilderness was Christ; but let us turn to the passage from which he quotes, and we shall see that he is there called *Jehovah*. Deut. vi. 16. "Ye shall not tempt *the Lord* your *God*, as ye tempted him in Massah." Here the original is, *Jehovah* your God. Thus the same person, styled *Jehovah* by Moses, is by St. Paul explicitly said to be *Christ*.

Various other instances might be specified, in which the Christ of the New Testament is identified with the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament; but these are so clear that we need not multiply quotations. Now, if, as we have seen, *Jehovah*, which means the self-existent God, the highest title the Almighty ever claimed, is applied to Christ, will it not follow that Christ is God?

2. *Lord of glory*. 1 Cor. ii. 8. "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the *Lord of glory*." Here we see that Jesus Christ is styled the *Lord of glory*; but that appellation is proper to none but God; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*.

3. *God*. Jesus Christ in the Scriptures is styled God. John i. 1.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the *Word was God*." Here Jesus Christ is called God; but that term is applicable to none but *God*; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*. Again, Psalm xlv. 6, 7. "Thy throne, O *God*, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre; thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore *God, thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here, in the original, is found the word *Elohim*, or *God*; but now turn to Heb. i. 8, and we see this passage quoted, and applied to Christ, thus: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O *God*, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," &c.

Other passages, equally forcible, might be adduced, but these are sufficient to show, that Jesus Christ is, in the Scriptures, called *God*; but this term can be applied to none but *God*; therefore Jesus Christ must be *God*.

Unitarians, to evade the force of this argument, which they cannot but feel to be conclusive, have, most unfortunately for their cause, attempted a change in the translation, so as to make it read, "God is thy throne forever and ever." This translation, instead of calling the Son, God, or *Elohim*, is made to say, that God, or *Elohim*, is the *throne of the Son*. Hence it would follow that the Son must be superior to God, or *Elohim*, since he who sits upon the throne is superior to the throne itself. Thus, to avoid acknowledging the Deity of Christ, men have been rashly led even to undeify the Father, and hurl their artillery against the eternal throne!

4. *God with us*. This title is in Scripture applied to Christ. Matt. i. 23. "And they shall call his name *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*." Here Jesus Christ is called "God with us;" but that appellation is proper to none but God; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

5. *God over all*. In Rom. ix. 5, we read, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is *over all, God* blessed forever." Here our Saviour is styled "God over all;" consequently, he must be the Supreme God; for none can be greater than that God who is "over all."

6. *God manifest in the flesh*. The same being who was manifested in the flesh, or became *incarnate*, is called God:—1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness; *God was manifest in the flesh*," &c. And in Acts xx. 28, we read, "Feed the church of *God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood." These passages show that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, was also *God*.

7. *True God*. This appellation is in the Scriptures given to Christ.

1 John v. 20. "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ; this is the *true God*, and eternal life." John xvii. 3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." From these passages we learn that there is but "one true God," and that Jesus Christ is that true God.

8. *Great God*. In Titus ii. 13, we read, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the *great God*, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here, Jesus Christ is styled the "great God;" consequently, he must be very and eternal God.

9. *Mighty God*. In Isa. ix. 6, we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The *mighty God*, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Here, the "son given," and the "child born," which is Christ, is called the "mighty God;" consequently, Christ is very and eternal God.

Thus have we clearly seen from the Scriptures, that Jesus Christ is designated by the following titles:—*Jehovah, Lord of Glory, God, God with us, God over all, God manifest in the flesh, true God, great God, and mighty God*. If this be true, then it will follow, that if there were any other God beside Jesus Christ, the titles of Christ could not apply to that other God; consequently, he could neither be *Jehovah, The Lord of glory, God, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, the true God, the great God*, nor the *mighty God*; which is the same as to say, he could not be God at all. Therefore, we conclude, from the *titles* ascribed to Christ, that he is truly and properly very and eternal God.

But, strange as it may appear, all this weight of argument, which we conceive to be nothing short of demonstration, is attempted to be set aside, by the plea, that "men, or created intelligences, are sometimes called *gods* in the Scriptures." To which we reply, that in all places where the term God is applied to created beings, it is in an obviously inferior, accommodated, or figurative sense; and this is plainly seen in the context. For example, in the seventh chapter and first verse of Exodus, where God says to Moses, "See, I have made thee a *god* to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." The figurative sense in which the term *god* is used, is so obvious, from the context, that no one can be misled thereby. But in all the titles which we have seen applied to Christ, as clearly demonstrating his proper Divinity, there is no inferior or figurative sense to be gathered from the context; but, on the contrary, the terms are used in their proper sense, with their fullest import, with nothing in the context to authorize a figurative or restricted acceptation. Hence, the objection must fall to the ground; and we will still be compelled to admit that the titles

applied to Christ, unless inspiration is designed to mislead, do, most clearly and conclusively, demonstrate his real and proper Divinity.

II. *ATTRIBUTES.* In the second place, the attributes ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures prove that he is *God*.

1. *Eternity.* In Isa. ix. 6, Christ is called “The *everlasting* Father;” or, as critics generally render it, “Father of the *everlasting* age;” or “Father of *eternity*.” Either rendering will sufficiently establish the eternity of Christ. John viii. 58. “Before Abraham was, I am.” Again, Rev. i. 17. “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the *first and the last*.” And in Rev. xii. 13, we read, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, *the first and the last*.” In Rev. i. 8, we read, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which *is*, and which *was*, and which *is to come*, the Almighty.” And immediately after John heard these words, “he turned to see the voice that spake with him,” and he saw “one like unto the Son of man.” Hence it is clear, that all these words were uttered by our Saviour; and they evidently imply the eternity of his nature; but none but God can be eternal; therefore Christ must be God.

2. *Immutability.* This attribute is ascribed to Christ. In Heb. i. 12, we read in reference to Christ: “But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall not fail.” Heb. xiii. 8. “Jesus Christ *the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever*.” In these passages the immutability of Christ is clearly expressed; but none but God can be immutable; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

3. *Omnipresence.* In the Scriptures this attribute is applied to Christ. Matt. xxviii. 20. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*.” It is not possible for this promise to be fulfilled, unless Christ be omnipresent. Matt. xviii. 20. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there *am I* in the midst of them.” John iii. 13. “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven*.” These texts clearly teach the omnipresence of Christ; consequently he must be God.

4. *Omnipotence.* This attribute is, in the Scriptures, ascribed to Christ. Matt. xxviii. 18. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And in Rev. i. 8, Jesus Christ is called, “The *Almighty*.” Hence the attribute of omnipotence belongs to him; therefore he must be God.

5. *Omniscience.* This attribute is ascribed to Christ in the following passages: — 1 Cor. i. 24. “But unto them which are called, both

Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the *wisdom of God*." Col. ii. 2, 3. "Of Christ, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*." John xvi. 30. "Now we are sure that thou *knowest all things*, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." John xxi. 17. "Lord, thou *knowest all things*; thou knowest that I love thee." John ii. 24, 25. "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he *knew what was in man*."

The above clearly testify that Christ is omniscient; but none but God can be omniscient; therefore, Christ must be God.

From what has been said, it clearly follows, according to the Scriptures, that Christ is *eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient*. Now it is impossible that any but the Supreme God should be possessed of these perfections; therefore, the conclusion is irresistible that Jesus Christ is the supreme and eternal God.

That the above argument from the attributes of Christ may be seen in its full force, it is only necessary to reflect that they are the highest perfections which can possibly pertain to Deity, and without which, he would instantly cease to be God. In fact, they enter into the very definition of the character of God; so much so, that no being, without them, can be God; and any being, possessing them, must be God.

Those who deny the proper Divinity of Christ have admitted that these attributes are ascribed to him, but allege that "he only possesses them by delegation from the Father." To which we reply, that the hypothesis is self-contradictory and absurd. As these attributes are all infinite, if delegated at all, they must be entirely delegated. Hence, if the Father delegated infinite perfection to the Son, he could not have still possessed it himself; for no part of that which is entirely given to another, can be left. Hence it would follow, that the Father could no longer be God. Indeed, the whole scheme of a delegated God, in the proper sense of that term, is absurd in itself; for there can be but one being possessed of infinite perfections; and these, in their very nature, are not susceptible of transfer.

III. THE WORKS ascribed to Christ, in the Holy Scriptures, are such as properly belong to none but God, and can be performed by none but the Great Supreme; consequently, they clearly prove that Jesus Christ is very and eternal God.

1. *Creation*, in the proper sense of the word, is ascribed to Christ; but this is a work which none can perform, except the great First Cause of all things, who is universally understood to be God; therefore, Christ must be God. That Christ is the Creator of all things, is seen from the

following passages — John i. 1—3, and 14. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” &c.

Here we may observe, that the same Word, or *Logos*, that was made flesh, made all things; consequently, if he was a creature, he made himself, which would imply an absurdity. Again, in Col. i. 15—17, we read, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by him *were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things were created by him*, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Upon this passage we may remark, that if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who made all things, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “by him *were all things created.*” Again; if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who existed prior to all other beings, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “he is *before all things.*” Again; if, by the eternal God, we understand that being who sustains all things in being, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “by him *all things consist.*” Once more; if, by the eternal God, we understand that being for whom all things were made, then Jesus Christ is the eternal God; for “all things were made by him, and *for him.*” From the passages above quoted, it is plain as language can make it, that the work of creation is ascribed to Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read, “In the beginning *God created* the heavens and the earth.” From the similarity with which the first chapter of John commences, we are well convinced that the apostle had his mind placed on the record of Moses in the first of Genesis, and referred to the same beginning and the same creation. Hence the peculiar force of the argument. The same creation spoken of by Moses, in the first of Genesis, and ascribed to God, is spoken of by the apostles, in the first of John and the first of Colossians, and ascribed to Christ.

The whole power of this argument some have, however, endeavored to evade, by saying that “Christ performed the work of creation merely as a delegated being, exercising delegated powers;” but this is preposterous, because it has nothing in the text to sustain it. Nay, it flatly contradicts the inspired record; for it is said, Christ created all things “*for himself;*” whereas, a delegated being acts, not “*for himself,*” but “*for him by whom he is delegated.*” Thus it is clear that the ascription of the work of creation to Christ establishes his real and proper Divinity.

2. *Preservation* is properly a work of the Supreme God, but, that this is attributed to Christ in the Scriptures, is seen from the quotation already made from Col. i. 17, "By him *all things consist*." In Heb. i. 3, we read, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and *upholding all things by the word of his power*, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here we see that the great work of preserving or upholding the universe is directly ascribed to Christ, and that without any intimation that he was exercising only a delegated power; consequently, if preservation be a work proper to none but the Supreme God, Jesus Christ must be that being.

3. *Pardon*, or the forgiveness of sins, is ascribed to Christ. In Matt. ix. 6, we read, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to *forgive sins*, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Col. iii. 13. "Even as *Christ forgave* you, so also do ye." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*." Thus we see that the forgiveness of sins, in his own name and by his own authority, is a work of Christ; but it is a work properly belonging to none but God; therefore, Christ must be God.

4. *Miracles*. These were performed by Christ, by his own proper authority. Prophets and apostles have wrought miracles, in the name and by the authority of God, who sent and empowered them; but they always confessed that it was not through their "own power or holiness," but by the power of *God*, that the wonders were performed. But how different were the miracles of Christ! "The winds and the sea obeyed him." The sick were healed, the dead were raised up at a word, and all nature was subject to his godlike control. Not only did he perform the most astonishing miracles himself, by his own authority, and at his own pleasure, but the miracles performed by the apostles were attributed to the potency of the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus it is clear that Christ performed miracles in a higher sense than ever prophet or apostle could claim to do, and in a sense proper to none but God; consequently, the miracles of Christ attest his real and proper Divinity.

5. *Judgment*. The judgment of the world, at the last day, is a work proper to be conducted by God alone; but this also is, in the Scriptures, attributed to Christ, as a work belonging to him. That Christ is to be the judge of the world, appears from the following passages:—Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Phil. ii. 9—11. "Wherefore

God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the *name of Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." 2 Tim. iv. 1. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who shall *judge the quick and the dead* at his appearing and his kingdom." John v. 22. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed *all judgment unto the Son*." Matt. xxv. 31, &c. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him," &c. Thus it is expressly and repeatedly declared that Jesus Christ is to be the judge in the great day of accounts. Now, if this be a work proper to God alone, and if it be expressly attributed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, it will irresistibly follow that Jesus Christ is God.

That God is to be the judge in the great day of retribution, is abundantly evident from Scripture. In Heb. xii. 23, we read, "To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to *God the judge of all*, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Rom. iii. 6. "For then how shall *God judge the world?*" Eccl. xi. 9. "But know thou, that for all these things *God will bring thee into judgment*."

Thus we discover how expressly it is set forth in Scripture, that it is the work of God to judge the world at the last day; and yet we have seen clearly that this work is ascribed to Christ; consequently, Christ is God.

Thus have we seen, that the works of *creation, preservation, the forgiveness of sins, the performance of miracles, and the judgment of the world*, are all ascribed to Christ, and that they are works properly belonging to God alone; consequently, they demonstrate the true and proper Divinity of Christ.

Arians and Socinians, generally, endeavor to evade the force of the argument derived from the works attributed to Christ, by asserting that "Christ exercises all this authority, and performs all these stupendous works, merely as a delegated creature." But this is an assumption, not only unsupported by Scripture, but, as already shown, in direct opposition to the inspired record. That it is also unreasonable and absurd, will be readily perceived, when we reflect for a moment on the nature of these powers, said to be delegated or imparted. For instance; take the first which we presented,—creation. Now, to say that Jesus Christ produced the work of creation out of nothing, by the exercise of a delegated power, would necessarily imply that omnipotent or infinite power had been delegated to him; for no power short of that is adequate to

the work in question. But if that omnipotent or infinite power was delegated to Christ, then it necessarily follows, either that there are two beings of infinite power, and consequently two Gods, or that the Father has ceased to be possessed of omnipotence himself, having transferred this perfection to another, and, consequently, ceased to be God. Take either horn of the dilemma, and it may easily be seen that the notion of delegated creative power leads to manifest absurdity.

IV. HONORS. 1. The *Divine worship* ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures demonstrates his Supreme Godhead. In Matt. iv. 10, our Saviour says, "For it is written, Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And throughout the whole history of the Bible, to pay Divine homage or worship to any being except God, was idolatry, a crime of deepest dye.

Now, if it can be shown that Jesus Christ is a proper object of worship or Divine honors, it will necessarily follow that he is very and eternal God. That he is a proper object of Divine worship, appears from the following passages:—Luke xxiv. 51, 52. "And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they *worshipped* him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Acts i. 24. "And they *prayed*, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, *calling upon God*, and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. "For this thing I *besought the Lord thrice*, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me." 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself*, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, *comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work*." 1 Cor. i. 2. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, both theirs and ours." Heb. i. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him*." Rev. v. 11—13. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and*

wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, *Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power*, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.*"

Thus do we see that prayer, praise, homage, devotion, and the highest species of worship, such as can be rendered to no created intelligence without the grossest idolatry, are claimed by, and ascribed to, our blessed Saviour; consequently, he must be the Supreme God. The Bible is expressly designed to destroy every species of idolatry; but if Jesus Christ be not the Supreme Jehovah, the holy volume itself is the best constructed system that could have been devised, for the successful encouragement and promotion of idolatry in its grossest form.

2. *Godhead.* The honors of the Supreme Godhead are emphatically ascribed to Christ. In Heb. i. 3, we read, "Who being the *brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.*" This passage conclusively identifies the natures of Christ and of the Father. To see the force of the passage, it is only necessary to reflect, that the glory of the Father, in the absolute and supreme sense of the term, means his supreme perfections. Now, observe, it is not said that Christ reflects the glory of the Father, but that he is that glory. But lest it might still be supposed that he is only the glory of the Father in an inferior or delegated sense, it is said he is "the *brightness of his glory*;" which implies that he is the glory of the Father in the superlative sense. In Col. i. 15, we read, "Who is the *image of the invisible God.*" And in the 19th verse, "For it pleased the Father that in him should *all fulness dwell.*" Again, in Col. ii. 9, we read, "For in him dwelleth *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

Observe here, first, Christ is said to be "the *image of the invisible God.*" This must refer to his Divine perfections; and Christ cannot be the image of them, unless he possesses them entire. Again; it is here said that in Christ "all fulness" dwells. This can have no meaning, unless it implies the infinite perfections of Jehovah. But lest there might still be room for cavil, it is said, in the third place, that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the *Godhead bodily.*" Language could not be framed more strongly to express supreme Divinity.

3. *Equality with the Father* is an honor claimed by, and attributed to, Christ. Here we may observe, that as God the Father is a being of infinite perfections, no finite being can be equal with him; none can be equal with him without possessing an identity of nature, so as to constitute the same infinite and undivided essence. That this equality is ascribed to Christ, is seen in the following Scriptures:—Phil. ii. 6.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God.*” John v. 18. “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself *equal with God.*” In verse 23d, “That all men should *honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.*” John x. 33. “The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God.*” John xiv. 9. “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” Here we see the equality of Christ with the Father clearly presented. He claimed it himself. He “thought it not robbery to be *equal with God.*” The Jews understood him to claim this equality in an absolute sense; for they said, “Thou *makest thyself God.*” If they misunderstood him in this claim, he must have designed to deceive them; for he does not correct the error.

Again, he claims equal honors with the Father. If Jesus Christ be not God, surely this would be gross blasphemy, and the sanction of palpable idolatry!

Thus have we seen, that the honors of *Divine worship, Supreme Godhead, and equality with the Father,* are, in Scripture, plainly ascribed to Christ; consequently, he must be very and eternal God.

In conclusion we would say, that the Divinity of Christ is a doctrine, not only expressly and abundantly taught in the Bible, but perfectly consistent with the general scheme of salvation presented in the gospel. Christ is there exhibited as the great atoning sacrifice for sin, and Redeemer of the world. That he may be an adequate Mediator between God and man, it seems essential that he possess both natures. Were he a mere creature, all the service in his power to render would belong to God, as a matter of debt on his own account; consequently, he could have no merit to spare, as an atonement for mankind.

Finally, he is presented as the *Saviour of the world*; as the ground and foundation of the sinner’s hope and confidence, in the hour of affliction, death, and judgment. How essential does it appear that the arm on which we lean for the salvation of our immortal souls should be strong to deliver, and mighty to save! Well might we tremble, if our eternal hopes were all based upon a finite creature! But, thanks be to God, he in whom we trust, as our refuge and Redeemer, possesses infinite perfections. He is the Holy One of Israel; the unoriginated and eternal Jehovah. He possesses those titles and attributes, performs those works, and receives those honors, which properly can belong to none but the Great Supreme. To him be glory and dominion forever.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE III.

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| QUESTION 1. What is the import of the word <i>Christ</i> ? | 23. Omnipotent? |
| 2. How may the real and proper <i>humanity</i> of Christ be proved? | 24. Omniscient? |
| 3. What is the Socinian theory of Christ? | 25. How do these attributes prove the Deity of Christ? |
| 4. The Arian? | 26. How is the attempt made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? |
| 5. The Trinitarian? | 27. What exalted works are ascribed to Christ? |
| 6. From what four sources are proofs of Christ's real Divinity deduced? | 28. What is the evidence that Creation is ascribed to him? |
| 7. What exalted titles are ascribed to Christ? | 29. Preservation? |
| 8. What is the proof that he is styled Jehovah? | 30. Pardon? |
| 9. Lord of glory? | 31. Miracles? |
| 10. God? | 32. Judgment? |
| 11. God with us? | 33. How do these works prove the proper Divinity of Christ? |
| 12. God over all? | 34. How is the effort made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? |
| 13. God manifest in the flesh? | 35. What are the exalted honors ascribed to Christ? |
| 14. True God? | 36. What is the evidence that Divine worship is ascribed to him? and how does it demonstrate his proper Divinity? |
| 15. Great God? | 37. The Supreme Godhead? |
| 16. Mighty God? | 38. Equality with the Father? |
| 17. How do these titles demonstrate his proper Divinity? | 39. Whence does it appear that the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, accords with the gospel scheme of salvation? |
| 18. How is the attempt made to evade the force of the argument? and what is the reply? | |
| 19. What attributes are mentioned as being ascribed to Christ? | |
| 20. What is the proof that he is Eternal? | |
| 21. Immutable? | |
| 22. Omnipresent? | |

LECTURE IV.

THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SPIRIT is a term of so frequent occurrence in the Sacred Writings, and presents a theme of contemplation so intimately connected with the entire system of revealed truth, that a careful investigation of the subject must be of vital importance.

The word rendered *Spirit*, in Hebrew, is *ruach*, and in Greek, *pneuma*, which in those languages signify, primarily, *breath*, or *wind*, from the verb signifying *to breathe*, or *to blow*. The etymology of the word, however, can afford us but little aid in the investigation of the subject of the Holy Spirit, as presented in the Bible. Here we must rely entirely upon the declarations of Inspiration.

In reference to what we are to understand by the Holy Spirit, as used in the Scriptures, there has existed from the early ages of Christianity, among professed Christians, a diversity of sentiment. Some have understood thereby merely an attribute, energy, or operation of the Divine Being, denying to the Holy Spirit any personal existence whatever; whilst others have contended both for the personal existence and the real Deity of the Holy Spirit. The former has been the sentiment generally of Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, &c. The latter has been the creed of the great body of Orthodox Christians, from the apostolic day; and, as we shall endeavor to show, is the doctrine of the Bible.

I. PERSONALITY. In the first place, we shall endeavor to establish the personality of the Holy Spirit. By this, we here mean, that the Holy Spirit is a real being, possessing intelligence, and performing personal actions; not, however, a being distinct and separate in essence from the Father. We understand the one undivided essence or being in the Godhead to exist in three distinct persons;—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We would prove the personality of the Holy Ghost, 1. By the *Appellations*; 2. By the *Actions*; 3. By the *Honors*, ascribed to him. If these be such as can only be applicable to a real and personal existence, then the inference will be clear that the Holy Spirit is a real and personal being, and not a mere abstract attribute, energy, or influence.

1. The APPELLATIONS used in the Scriptures, in reference to the Holy Spirit, are such as properly belong to none but a personal existence; consequently, they demonstrate the Holy Spirit's personality.

First, the *masculine pronouns* in the Greek New Testament are constantly applied to the Holy Spirit. In John xiv. 26, we read, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things." Here, the pronoun *he*, the masculine gender, is used; which would be highly improper if a real person be not referred to. Again, John xvi. 7, 8. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him* unto you. And when *he* is come, *he* will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Here the masculine pronoun is thrice used to denote the Holy Spirit. To designate the Holy Spirit thus constantly, in a plain, narrative style, by the pronoun "he," if he be not a real person, would be contrary to the well known rules and usages of language. We would present one more quotation from the same chapter, verses 13—15. "Howbeit, when *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth: for *he* shall not speak of *himself*; but whatsoever *he* shall hear, that shall *he* speak: and *he* will shew you things to come. *He* shall glorify me; for *he* shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that *he* shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." The masculine personal pronoun, the strongest appellation of personality in the language, is, in this passage, applied to the Holy Spirit no less than ten times. Is it possible for us to read this passage, and believe the Holy Spirit to be a mere abstract attribute, quality, energy, or influence, without so much as a personal existence? If this passage does not imply that he is a personal and intelligent being, we know of no language that could teach the idea. Again; he is over and over spoken of under the appellation of the "Comforter;" and this term is used as a proper name, (in Greek, the *Paraclete*,) to designate an intelligent agent, and not an abstract quality or influence. Therefore, we conclude, from the appellations used in the Scriptures to denote the Holy Spirit, that he is a personal existence.

2. The ACTIONS attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures prove his personality. If these are seen to be personal in their character, such as can only pertain to a personal and real intelligence, then the argument for the personality of the Holy Spirit will be conclusive. In the passages already quoted, the following acts are attributed to the Holy Spirit, viz.:—1. To be sent. 2. To teach. 3. To come. 4. To reprove. 5. To guide. 6. To speak. 7. To hear. 8. To show. 9. To glorify. 10. To receive; and 11. To take. Here are as many

as eleven different personal acts, only proper to a being of intelligence and personality ; consequently, the Holy Spirit must be a personal being.

Again ; in Acts v. 32, we read, “ And we are his *witnesses* of these things, and so is also *the Holy Ghost*, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” John xv. 26. “ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall *testify* of me.” In these passages the Holy Spirit is said to bear witness or testify, — a personal act, which evinces his personality. In Acts xiii. 2, we read, “ As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost *said*, Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have *called* them.” In this verse there are no less than four proofs of the personality of the Holy Spirit. The personal pronoun is used twice, *me* and *I*, and the Holy Ghost is represented as having “*said*” or spoken to the apostles, and as having “called” Barnabas and Saul ; and again, in the fourth verse, the Holy Ghost is said to have “sent forth” Barnabas and Saul.

In 1 Cor. ii. 10, we read, “ For the Spirit *searcheth all things*, yea, the deep things of God.” Verse 13th. “ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost *teacheth*.” In these passages, the Holy Spirit is represented as searching and teaching, — personal acts, which prove his personality.

In Rom. viii. 26, we read, “ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself *maketh intercession* for us with *groanings* which cannot be uttered.” Now, we might ask, if the Spirit be a mere abstract quality or energy, how such an abstraction can intercede and groan ? To what strange interpretation of Scripture will we be driven, if we deny the personality of the Holy Spirit !

3. The HONORS ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures are such as properly appertain to none but a personal being ; and, consequently, they prove his personality. First, he is honored by an association with the Father and the Son, in the exalted record in heaven. 1 John v. 7. “ For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.” Here it is evident that the Father and the Word are personal intelligences ; and from the association of the Holy Spirit with them, we have equal reason to admit his personality ; otherwise, we would have to suppose that the Father and the Word are both persons, but that the Holy Spirit is merely an energy or influence, exerted by one or both of the other witnesses, and as such, his record would be unmeaning and useless ; for what could it add to the record of the Father and the Word ?

Again ; the honor of an association with the Father and the Son, in

the sacred ordinance of baptism, is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, if the Holy Ghost be not a personal existence, how are we to understand this solemn dedication? We are dedicated, 1, to the person of the Father; 2, to the person of the Son; and, 3, to what?—not the person of the Spirit; but a mere attribute or energy, something having no personal existence. How strangely absurd the idea! Thus we arrive at the conclusion, from the *appellations*, the *actions*, and the *honors* ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, that he is a real and personal intelligence.

II. REAL DIVINITY. We come now to consider the evidence in favor of the real and Supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit. The testimony on this point, like that in favor of the Deity of Christ, is derived from four different sources;—the *titles*, *attributes*, *works*, and *honors* ascribed to him in the Scriptures.

1. The *TITLES* ascribed to the Holy Spirit establish his proper Deity.

(1.) He is called God. In Acts v. 3, 4, we read, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the *Holy Ghost*, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto *God*." Here, in the most express and full sense of the word, the Holy Ghost is called God. And if he be not God, the passage is made directly to teach a falsehood.

(2.) He is called "The Lord of Hosts." In Isa. vi. 5, 9, 10, we read, "Then said I, Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the *Lord of Hosts*." "And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Now, read Acts xxviii. 25—27. "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the *Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal

them." Here we discover that the person who appeared unto Isaiah, and who is by him called the Lord of Hosts, is by St. Paul, in his quotation, expressly called the Holy Ghost. The Lord of Hosts is one of the highest titles of the Deity; but if the Holy Ghost be the Lord of Hosts, then it will follow that the Holy Ghost must be God. Thus it is clear that the Holy Ghost, in the Scriptures, is styled God, and the Lord of Hosts; but these titles can properly be applied to none but the Supreme God; therefore, the Holy Ghost must be the Supreme God.

2. The ATTRIBUTES ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, demonstrate his real Divinity.

(1.) *Eternity*. This attribute is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Heb. ix. 14, we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the *eternal Spirit* offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Here the Holy Spirit is called eternal; but that attribute can belong to none but God; consequently, he is God.

(2.) *Omniscience* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 10. "For the Spirit searcheth *all things*, yea, *the deep things of God*." From this passage it is clear that the Holy Ghost is omniscient; consequently, he must be very and eternal God.

(3.) *Omnipotence* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Rom. xv. 19, we read, "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the *power of the Spirit* of God." That the power of the Spirit here spoken of was infinite, is evident from the miraculous energy which he is here said to have exercised. But as this mighty power belongs to God alone, therefore, the Holy Spirit must be God.

(4.) *Omnipresence* is in the Scriptures ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Ps. cxxxix. 7. "Whither shall I go from thy *Spirit*, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the *temple* of God, and that the *Spirit of God dwelleth in you*?" Rom. viii. 9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God dwell in you*." These passages show that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent; otherwise it would not be impossible to "flee from his presence," nor could he dwell, at the same time, in the hearts of all his people in all places. But this attribute belongs to none but God; therefore, the Holy Spirit is God.

3. The WORKS attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible attest his proper Divinity.

(1.) *Creation* is a work proper to God alone; but, that this is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, appears from the following passages:—Job xxxiii.

4. "The *Spirit of God hath made me*, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job xxvi. 13. "By his *Spirit* he hath *garnished*

the hearens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." Here we see the work of creation ascribed to the Holy Spirit; but that is a work proper to God alone; therefore, the Holy Spirit is God.

(2.) *Preservation* is a work ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Ps. li. 12, we read, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and *uphold me with thy free Spirit.*"

Here the work of preservation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit; but this is a work of God alone; therefore, the Holy Spirit is God.

(3.) *Inspiration of the prophets* is a work proper to God alone; but this, in the Scriptures, is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In 2 Pet. i. 21, we read, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost.*" Here we see that it was the Holy Ghost who inspired the prophets; but, in Heb. i. 1, we read, "*God*, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." Hence it was God who inspired the prophets; therefore, the Holy Spirit must be God.

We have now clearly seen, from the Scriptures, that the exalted works of *creation*, *preservation*, and the *inspiration of the prophets*, are all attributed to the Holy Spirit; but these are works again and again attributed to God, and which none but the infinite God can perform; therefore, the Holy Spirit must be very and eternal God.

4. HONORS. We come next to consider the exalted honors ascribed to the Holy Spirit. If these are such as can properly belong to God alone, it will necessarily follow that the Holy Spirit is God.

(1.) *Supreme Majesty* is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In Matt. xii. 31, we read, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Here we see that the Holy Ghost may be sinned against, and even so blasphemed that the sin cannot be forgiven. A character so revered and majestic can be no other than the Supreme God.

(2.) The Holy Spirit is honored by an *association with the Father and the Son, in baptism*, as seen in Matt. xxviii. 19; and also in the Divine benediction, as seen in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. These Divine and exalted associations cannot be understood in any sense, consistent with the pure worship of God, without admitting the Supreme Deity of the Holy Spirit. God represents himself as "a jealous God, who will not give his honor to another." But if the name of a mere creature, attribute, or influence, be connected with God the Father, in the most solemn forms of religious worship, how can we contemplate the subject, without seeing therein the most direct encouragement to idolatry?

Surely, the supreme majesty and exalted associations, which we have just seen ascribed to the Holy Spirit, attest his proper Divinity.

Thus have we shown that the exalted *Titles, Attributes, Works, and Honors*, ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, demonstrate his real and Supreme Godhead. Whereas, if we deny the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, we are reduced to the glaring absurdity of saying, that the highest titles, the supreme attributes, the most exalted works, and the most sacred honors of the Deity himself, are, in the Scriptures, most explicitly and repeatedly ascribed to a mere abstract attribute, emanation, energy, or influence, possessing no personal or conscious existence whatever; and that, too, in the volume expressly designed to destroy every species of idolatry. Surely it must be plain, that to deify an influence, or anything else besides the Great and Eternal Being, is as really idolatry, as to bow down before stocks and stones, or “birds and beasts, and creeping things.” But according to the Bible, “God is a Spirit,” and that Holy Spirit is God.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE IV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the Hebrew word in the Old Testament, and the Greek word in the New Testament, rendered <i>Spirit</i>; and what do they mean?</p> <p>2. What has been the opinion of Arians, Socinians, &c., concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>3. What the view of Trinitarians, and the Orthodox generally?</p> <p>4. What do we mean by the <i>Personality</i> of the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>5. From what three different sources are the proofs of the Holy Spirit's <i>Personality</i> deduced?</p> <p>6. What is the evidence from the <i>Appellations</i> of the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>7. The <i>Actions</i>? The <i>Honors</i>?</p> <p>8. From what four different sources are the proofs of the <i>Deity</i> of the Holy Spirit derived?</p> <p>9. What is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is called <i>God</i>?</p> | <p>10. The <i>Lord of Hosts</i>?</p> <p>11. What Divine <i>attributes</i> are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>12. What is the evidence of his Omniscience?</p> <p>13. Omnipotence?</p> <p>14. Omnipresence?</p> <p>15. What exalted <i>works</i> are ascribed to the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>16. What is the evidence that <i>Creation</i> is ascribed to him?</p> <p>17. Preservation?</p> <p>18. Inspiration of the prophets?</p> <p>19. What Divine <i>Honors</i> are ascribed to Him?</p> <p>20. What is the evidence of his Supreme Majesty?</p> <p>21. What exalted associations are ascribed to Him?</p> <p>22. To what glaring absurdity are we reduced, if we deny the Supreme Divinity of the Holy Spirit?</p> |
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LECTURE V.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

THE word TRINITY is from the Latin *trinitas*, which is a compound word, from *tres*, three, and *unus*, one ; therefore, the signification of the word is *three one*, or, as it is used in theology, *three in one*.

Some have objected to the use of the term trinity, merely from the fact that it is not found in our version of the Scriptures ; but this objection is perfectly frivolous, if it can be shown that the Bible contains the idea which the word properly expresses. It would not require much ingenuity, to embody the most heterodox sentiments, by a collocation of Scripture phrases ; and, on the contrary, truths the most clearly revealed may be correctly expressed without adopting the precise language of Scripture. The paramount object of the student of divinity is, to gain a correct knowledge of the sentiments of revelation.

On the important subject of the Trinity, we will first present an illustration of the Orthodox view ; secondly, show that it is scriptural ; and, thirdly, answer some objections.

I. According to the general sentiment of Orthodox Christians, the mode of the Divine existence, as well as the essence of the Divine nature, is one of the sublime mysteries of God, which is too profound for human wisdom to fathom. Upon this subject it becomes us meekly to receive the information with which revelation has favored us, neither doubting the truth of what has been revealed, nor permitting our speculations to travel beyond the bounds of the inspired record.

By the Trinity, according to our understanding of the Scriptures, we are not to suppose that there are three Gods, and that these three Gods are one God ; nor are we to understand that the three persons in the Godhead are one person ; either position would not only be unscriptural, but would imply in itself a manifest contradiction.

Nor are we to suppose that, in the Divine nature, there are three distinct intelligent beings, and that these three are so mysteriously and intimately united as to constitute but one being. This, also, would be both unscriptural and self-contradictory. And we may remark, that Socinians, Arians, and others who have written in opposition to the Trinity, have, very generally, represented the doctrine of Trinitarians,

according to one or the other of the views already presented. That some advocates of the Trinity have expressed themselves in so ambiguous or unguarded a manner as, in some degree, to furnish a pretext for this presentation of the orthodox sentiment, must be admitted ; but that neither of the views yet presented contains a fair statement of the doctrine, as held by the intelligent Trinitarians generally, may easily be seen, by a reference to the creeds of the different orthodox denominations, as well as to the writings of their principal divines. The correct view of the subject, according to the representation of the most eminent orthodox divines, and the view which appears conformable to Scripture, is, that *the Godhead exists under three distinct personalities, at the same time, constituting but one God*. Although God the Father is an intelligent being, God the Son an intelligent being, and God the Holy Spirit an intelligent being, yet that they are not three distinct intelligent beings ; but that the three persons in the Godhead are one and the same being, so far as their nature is concerned, yet subsisting in three different persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It may not be unacceptable here to exhibit the opinion of several eminent orthodox divines on this subject, as presented by Dr. Doddridge, in the following words : “ Dr. Waterland, Dr. A. Taylor, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three proper distinct persons, entirely equal to, and independent upon, each other, yet making up one and the same being ; and that though there may appear many things inexplicable in the scheme, it is to be charged to the weakness of our understanding, and not to the absurdity of the doctrine itself.

“ Bishop Pearson, with whom Bishop Bull also agrees, is of opinion, that though God the Father is the fountain of the Deity, the whole Divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit, yet so as that the Father and the Son are not separate nor separable from the Divinity, but do still exist in it, and are most intimately united to it. This was also Dr. Owen's scheme.”

Thus it may be seen, that while it is not pretended that we can comprehend the manner of the existence of three persons in one God, any more than we can fathom the mysterious depths of the Divine essence, yet, such is the plain statement of the facts in the case, as learned from inspiration, that they involve in themselves no contradiction or absurdity. If we speak of the essential essence of the Divine Being, we say there is but one undivided essence ; but one being ; but one God : but if we speak of personal distinction, such as is properly expressed by the pronoun *I, thou, or he*, we say there are three persons in one and the same God ; or one and the same God in three persons. But if we are called upon to explain how three persons can exist in one God, we reply, that

the subject is neither more nor less difficult than the comprehension of any of the Divine attributes. Our faith embraces the fact as a matter of revelation; the manner of the fact, which involves the stupendous mystery, not being revealed, we leave beyond the veil, as a theme which may be presented for contemplation when we "shall know even as also we are known." All attempts, therefore, to explain the mystery of the Trinity, or the manner in which three persons constitute one God, we would repudiate as vain and futile, while we would plant our faith firm and immovable in the truth of the fact as revealed in the Bible.

II. Our second position is, to show that the doctrine of the Trinity, as already exhibited, *is in accordance with the Scriptures.*

1. It is necessarily implied in several positions which we have already seen established, in the preceding lectures.

(1.) *Unity of God.* In the second lecture, we showed, by various and express declarations of Scripture, that there is but **ONE** God. Indeed, this great principle,—the unity of the Godhead,—is the very foundation upon which the true worship is established. It is the denial of this which constitutes the greatest error and absurdity of Paganism. And we may say, that if the unity of God be not established in the Bible, it is in vain for us to appeal to that volume for testimony on any point whatever. The very first of the ten commandments is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and the constant language of God throughout the Bible is, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our God, is **ONE** Jehovah." This great truth, then, so essential for the prevention of idolatry, is thus strongly stamped upon the page of inspiration, and, we may add, abundantly confirmed by the harmony displayed in the works of God around us.

(2.) *Deity of Christ.* In the third lecture, we saw the Scripture evidence plainly establishing the real and proper Divinity of Jesus Christ. So pointed and direct was this testimony, as seen from the Titles, Attributes, Works, and Honors, ascribed to Christ, that, if we reject the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ, we flatly deny the word of God, nor can we appeal again to that volume for the establishment of any truth whatever.

(3.) *Deity of the Holy Spirit.* In the fourth lecture, we saw, with equal clearness and force, and by proofs of a similar character, the real Deity of the Holy Spirit established beyond the possibility of a doubt, unless we discard the Bible itself, and explain away, by a resort to strained and far-fetched criticism, the plainest declarations of the inspired record.

We now ask attention to the foregoing points, universally admitted or clearly established, and demand it at the hands of all who reject the

Trinity, to explain and reconcile these points, if they can, without admitting all that is meant by the Trinity.

- (1.) That God the Father is properly God, all admit.
- (2.) That the Son is God, has been already proved.
- (3.) That the Holy Spirit is God, has been already proved.
- (4.) That there is but one God, has been already proved.

Here, then, we say, is a Trinity clearly established. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three, in one sense of the word at least. The first all admit to be God, and the second and third have been proved to be God. Then it follows that there are three that are God; but it has also been proved that there is but one God. Then we have clearly established a three one God, which is the same as a Trinity. But it is clear that three cannot be one, in the same sense in which they are three. This would be self-contradictory; but for there to be three in one sense, and one in another sense, would involve no contradiction. Then it must be obvious that there are not three and one in the same sense. In what sense, then, shall we understand that there is one? Certainly in reference to the Godhead. There is but one God. But in what sense shall we understand that there are three? Certainly not in reference to the Godhead; for this, as we have seen, would be self-contradictory. But it must be understood in reference to some other distinction. This we denominate a personal distinction; first, because it is expressed in the Scriptures by the personal pronouns, *I, thou, he, &c.*; and these, in all languages, are proper appellatives of persons: secondly, the expression of this distinction by the term *person* is scriptural; for we find the word used to distinguish the person of the Father from that of the Son: "Who being the brightness of *his* (the Father's) glory, and the express image of his *person*."

Thus have we seen that there is but ONE God, and that in the unity of this Godhead there are THREE distinctions, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*; and that these distinctions are scripturally expressed by the term *person*. Then the sum of the whole matter is this:—that there are three persons in one God; or, in other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is a Bible truth.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity is confirmed, by frequent allusions to a plurality and threefold distinction in the Deity, more or less direct, in almost all parts of the Scriptures.

(1.) In the beginning of Genesis, the name by which God first reveals himself to us is *elohim*, a *plural* noun, the singular form of which is *eloah*. Now, if there be no plurality of persons in the Godhead, it is difficult to account for the use of the plural, instead of the singular noun; especially as the verb connected therewith is in the singular number.

Hence, there seems to be a strong probability that there is here a plain allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity, which was afterwards more clearly revealed.

(2.) This conclusion is still further confirmed by what we read in the 26th verse of the chapter: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Here the personal pronoun is used three times in the plural form. To account for this upon any other hypothesis than that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, is impossible. But on the supposition that there are three persons in the Unity of the Godhead, the matter becomes plain and easy. That the Word, or Son of God, was the active agent in the work of creation, is declared in the first chapter of John; and it is remarkable, that the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis introduces the agency of the Spirit also in this great work. "And the *Spirit* of God moved upon the face of the waters." Thus we have the agency of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all connected in the great work of creation, and yet "he that built (or made) all things is *God*." Again, in the 22d verse of the 3d chapter of Genesis, we have this plural form of the pronoun repeated; "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of *us*, to know good and evil." How difficult must it be for the anti-trinitarian to find a consistent interpretation!

(3.) *The three sacred names used in baptism*, has already been mentioned in proof of the Divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit. To which we may now add, that we here see a direct acknowledgment of all the persons of the Trinity. Upon the formula of baptism we would remark, that if there be no personal distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, why the necessity for the three names; and if each person named be not God, why the propriety of connecting the name of a creature, in terms of apparent perfect equality, with the name of the Supreme God, in a solemn act of worship?

(4.) In the conclusion of the last chapter of 2 Corinthians we have this solemn form of benediction: "The grace of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the love of *God*, and the communion of the *Holy Ghost*, be with you all." This benediction is virtually the offering up of a prayer to the three personages here specified; and from anything that appears, they are all petitioned with equal solemnity and reverence. If they be not all Divine, how could the apostle ever again admonish the Corinthians against idolatry? Surely, he had presented them an example of direct homage and supreme worship to a creature!

Thus have we seen the doctrine of the Trinity, or three persons in one God, abundantly established from the Scriptures; first, as necessarily implied in the admitted or established facts, that there is but one

God, that God the Father is God, that God the Son is God, and that God the Holy Spirit is God; secondly, we have seen it confirmed by frequent allusions, more or less explicit, in different parts of the Scriptures, to the several persons of the Godhead. We now close our argument with a single quotation from 1 John v. 7, which embodies, in one verse, the whole doctrine of the Trinity: "For there are *three* that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and *these three are one*."

III. In the last place, we would notice the principal objection which has been urged against this doctrine. It is this, — that "the doctrine of the Trinity is incomprehensible, and requires us to believe in mysteries." To which we reply, that the question with us ought not to be, whether we can comprehend the doctrine or not, but whether it is a doctrine declared in the Scriptures or not. If the latter can be established, then the circumstance of its being plain or mysterious to our understanding cannot affect our obligations to believe it in the least. It should be enough for us to know that God has spoken; and what he has declared we are bound to believe, or discard the whole Bible.

That the plain, common sense interpretation of Scripture teaches the doctrine, we might almost infer from the strong disposition of Socinians to twist from their plain import many passages of Scripture, to expunge others entirely from the sacred canon, and even to undervalue inspiration itself. But the objection is based upon a false premise. It assumes that we ought not to believe anything till we can comprehend it. If this be true, then we must hang up our flag of high-toned and universal scepticism; for what is there that we can comprehend? From the smallest insect, up through every link "of being's endless chain," there are mysteries, inexplicable mysteries, in every object that we contemplate. But yet we believe firmly in the existence of things. But, after all that has been said by way of objection about the mystery of the Trinity, the difficulty is equally great upon any subject connected with the Divine Being; for what attribute of God is it that we can comprehend? But let it be remembered that the great mystery about which the objection is started, relates not to the fact that there are three persons in one God, but to the manner of the fact. We cannot conceive how it can be; and yet the manner of the fact we are not required to embrace in our faith; — that is something not revealed. We are simply required to believe the fact as declared in Scripture.

In conclusion, we might ask, what could we gain, even in respect to exemption from difficulty, by renouncing the Trinity? We reply, that we would involve ourselves in difficulties far more numerous and perplexing. To instance only one; how could we reconcile it to the gen-

eral tenor of Scripture, and the plan of salvation, that the great work of changing the heart, and preparing the soul for heaven, is repeatedly attributed to the "power of Christ," and the "sanctification of the Spirit?" This is a work proper to God alone; a work which none but the Divine power can effect; and yet, if we deny the Trinity, we must attribute it, in the supreme sense, to a creature. We must look to the power of a creature to renew our souls, and lean upon a finite arm as the source of our eternal salvation.

The difficulties involved in the anti-trinitarian scheme might be multiplied, but enough has been said to show that the only consistent and scriptural scheme, and that which involves the least difficulty of all, is this, — that there is "one only living and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of equal power and glory forever." To Him be ascribed eternal praise!

"The Scriptures, while they declare the fundamental truth of natural religion, that God is one, reveal two persons, each of whom, with the Father, we are led to consider as God, and ascribe to all the three distinct personal properties. It is impossible that the three can be one in the same sense in which they are three; and therefore it follows, by necessary inference, that the unity of God is not a unity of persons; but it does not follow that it may not be a unity of a more intimate kind than any which we behold. A unity of consent and will neither corresponds to the conclusions of reason, nor is by any means adequate to a great part of the language of Scripture, for both concur in leading us to suppose a unity of nature. Whether the substance common to the three persons be specifically or numerically the same, is a question, the discussion of which cannot advance our knowledge, because neither of the terms is applicable to the subject; and, after all our researches and reading, we shall find ourselves just where we began, incapable of perceiving the manner in which the three persons partake of the same Divine nature. But we are very shallow philosophers indeed, if we consider this as any reason for believing that they do not partake of it; for we are by much too ignorant of the manner of the Divine existence to be warranted to say that the distinction of persons is an infringement of the Divine unity. 'It is strange boldness in men,' says Bishop Stillingfleet, 'to talk of contradictions in things above their reach. Hath not God revealed to us that he created all things; and is it not reasonable for us to believe this, unless we are able to comprehend the manner of doing it? Hath not God plainly revealed that there shall be a resurrection of the dead? And must we think it unreasonable to believe it, till we are able to comprehend all the changes of the particles of matter from the creation to the general resurrection? If nothing is to be

believed but what may be comprehended, the very being of God must be rejected, and all his unsearchable perfections. If we believe the attributes of God to be infinite, how can we comprehend them? We are strangely puzzled in plain, ordinary, finite things; but it is madness to pretend to comprehend what is infinite; and yet, if the perfections of God be not infinite, they cannot belong to him.' Since then the Scriptures teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one, and since the unity of three persons who partake of the same Divine nature must of necessity be a unity of the most perfect kind, we may rest assured that the more we can abstract from every idea of inequality, division, and separation, provided we preserve the distinction of persons, our conceptions approach the nearer to the truth."—(Hill's Lectures.)

The Bible doctrine of the Trinity is one of those sublime and glorious mysteries, which the mind of man, at least while shrouded in clay, cannot penetrate. We may study and meditate until *lost* in thought, yet never can we comprehend the mode and nature of the Divine Being. A trinity of persons, in the unity of Godhead, is something of which we can form no definite idea. The fact is revealed to us, beyond contradiction, in God's holy word. But, as to the *manner* of that fact, God says to reason, noble and mighty as is that faculty of the soul, "Thus far shalt thou go," "and here shall thy proud" flight "be stayed;" and while reason lies thus humbled in the dust, shorn of her vaunted strength, and perhaps sullenly murmuring she will never essay another heavenward flight, faith meekly whispers, "I am the resurrection and the life." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And when we shall have thrown off this earthly vestment for the "robe of righteousness," and when "we shall know even as also we are known," who can say what things may not be revealed to us? What knowledge *can* be so desirable to an immortal spirit as the knowledge of its Maker? Yet, hidden as are the mysteries of the Christian faith, they are not gloomy nor dark; for they concern him who is light, and love, and life. We are bound to believe all God has graciously revealed of himself; and it is no argument against belief in the Trinity, to say it is a mystery incomprehensible. Dost thou, proud mortal, doubt or disbelieve thine own existence? and yet, canst thou tell *how* the coursing of the red fluid through the veins preserves thee a probationer in time? "Lord, I do believe; help thou mine unbelief." Let me know thee in the pardon of all my sins through the Son of thy love, and in the enlightening and comforting influences of thy Holy Spirit! *Here* let me walk by faith,

till "faith is turned to sight" in a brighter world, and I shall see without the dimming veil of mortality before my raptured vision !

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE V.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what is the term <i>Trinity</i> derived, and what is its import ?</p> <p>2. Why has the use of the term been objected to ?</p> <p>3. Is the objection a reasonable and just one ?</p> <p>4. What are the three grand divisions of this lecture ?</p> <p>5. Can we thoroughly comprehend the mode of the Divine existence ?</p> <p>6. Are we to understand by the Trinity, <i>three</i> persons in <i>one</i> person, or three <i>Gods</i> in one God ?</p> <p>7. Are we to understand that there are <i>three</i> distinct intelligent beings in the God-head ?</p> <p>8. How have Socinians, &c., generally represented the doctrine of Trinitarians ?</p> <p>9. How may this statement be seen to be unfair ?</p> <p>10. What is the correct view of the doctrine of the Trinity ?</p> <p>11. Is each person in the Trinity an intelligent being ?</p> <p>12. Are there, then, in essence, three distinct intelligent beings ?</p> <p>13. What were the views of several eminent divines, on this subject, as given by Dr. Doddridge ?</p> | <p>14. To what does the great mystery of the Trinity relate ?</p> <p>15. What are the grand positions established in preceding lectures, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is implied ?</p> <p>16. In what sense are we to understand that <i>three</i> are <i>one</i> ?</p> <p>17. How are the distinctions in the God-head shown to be properly expressed by the term <i>person</i> ?</p> <p>18. What allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity is seen in the first of Genesis ?</p> <p>19. How does it appear that the three persons of the Trinity all had an agency in creation ?</p> <p>20. How is the Trinity proved from the form of baptism ?</p> <p>21. From the form of the benediction ?</p> <p>22. What verse of Scripture embodies the whole doctrine of the Trinity ?</p> <p>23. What is the grand objection to this doctrine ?</p> <p>24. How is the objection answered ?</p> <p>25. Do the opposite sentiments involve difficulties ?</p> <p>26. What is the instance given ?</p> <p>27. What is the least perplexing and most scriptural view ?</p> |
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LECTURE VI.

THE CREATION.

I. WE examine in what sense creation *is to be understood*.

The original word rendered *created*, in the first of Genesis, is *bara*, which, according to Kimchi, Buxtorf, and learned critics generally, means to bring forth into being what previously had no existence; — an egression from nonentity to entity. From the prime meaning of the word itself, as well as from the process, as presented in the Mosaic record, we learn that God, “in the beginning,” or at the commencement of time, made or created the matter of which the heavens and the earth were formed.

Many of the ancient heathens, ignorant of revelation and guided only by the wild speculations of their own imagination, had such inadequate conceptions of the character of Deity, that they could not conceive it possible for him to create the material universe out of nothing. Hence they supposed that matter, in a chaotic state, existed from all eternity, and that the Deity only arranged and combined the discordant materials, so as to bring order out of confusion, and cause the universe to appear in its harmony and beauty.

As we have already seen, this fabulous account of creation is contrary to the Mosaic history. St. Paul, in Heb. xi. 3, appears to aim a blow directly at this error of the Pagan philosophers, when he tells us, that “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” The “things which do appear” are material; but, according to the text just quoted, the worlds were not made of preëxistent matter. Indeed, the first work of creation, according to the Bible, appears to have been to call forth into being the materials of which the worlds were afterwards framed. Thus, we perceive that God, in the highest sense of the word, created all things out of nothing.

It might easily be shown, that the Mosaic account of the origin of the world is the only consistent theory of the material universe ever presented. The views upon this subject, of those who have rejected revelation, may all be embraced in two general divisions. First, the system already noticed, which admits the eternity of matter, but allows

that the power of God was exerted in forming, out of the original materials furnished to his hand, and which were coëxistent with him, the worlds as we see them displayed around us.

The second theory is that which teaches the eternity of the material universe, in its properly organized condition.

Both these theories are not only not countenanced by revelation, but are in direct contradiction to its plain declarations. That they are also absurd in themselves, and encumbered by insuperable difficulties in the view of reason, a little reflection will clearly evince.

First; to suppose that matter existed from eternity is to ascribe to it self-existence. That which existed from eternity could not have been produced by anything else; consequently, all the cause of its existence must be in itself; and this implies that it is self-existent and independent. Again; that which is self-existent and independent must exist necessarily; for if the cause of its existence has always been in itself, 't could not but have existed; otherwise, the necessary connection between cause and effect would be destroyed. Hence, if we say that matter existed from eternity, we assert that it existed necessarily; and if its existence was necessary, so were all its parts and properties; for the parts and properties of any substance inhere in the constitution of its essence. It appears, therefore, that if matter is eternal, it must exist necessarily in all its parts and properties. And if so, the particular state in which it exists must be necessary; and then, the same eternal necessity in itself, which determined the state of its existence, must determine its continuance in the same state; consequently, if matter had existed from eternity in a chaotic form, it must have continued forever in the same form; and upon that hypothesis, the worlds could never have been produced from chaos. Thus, the eternity of matter is seen to be unreasonable and absurd.

In the second place, to suppose that the world existed from all eternity, in its organized state, is unreasonable.

For, first, if eternal, it must be so in all its parts; and if in all its parts, then the inhabitants thereof are included; but to suppose an eternal succession of animals would be to suppose an infinite number made up of finite numbers, which would be unreasonable; for we may add as many finite numbers together as we please, yet they never can amount to infinity.*

The present state of improvement in the arts and sciences argues

* Bishop Pearson remarks that, "The actual eternity of this world is so far from being necessary, that it is of itself most improbable; and without the infallible certainty of faith, there is no single person carries more evidences of his youth than the world of its novelty." — (Exposition of the Creed.)

against the eternity of the world. As a natural consequence, each generation may profit by the labors and experience of the preceding one. So that, the natural course of improvement, from age to age, is progressive; but all the great and important inventions and discoveries in the arts and sciences, are of comparatively recent origin. To account for this, upon the supposition that men have eternally existed upon the earth, would be exceedingly difficult.

Once more; the comparatively modern date of the most ancient records, is another argument against the eternity of the world, in its organized state. Had the nations of the earth existed from all eternity, we might reasonably suppose that history, monumental or recorded, would carry us back for multiplied hundreds of centuries. These are only a few of the difficulties with which we find ourselves entangled, when, in reference to the origin of the world, we wish to become "wise above what is written."

II. THE DATE of creation. In the next place, we inquire concerning the time when the creation of the world took place.

According to the Septuagint, the date of creation is placed near six thousand years before Christ; but Archbishop Usher has shown, to the general satisfaction of the learned, that, according to the Hebrew chronology, the creation took place four thousand and four years previous to the birth of Christ. The original Hebrew is certainly better authority than a translation which, like the Septuagint, is admitted to contain many mistakes. Accordingly, the computation of Usher has been generally acceded to as correct.

Corroborative testimony to the correctness of this account may be gathered from general history and traditionary legends of the different nations of the earth. None of these, which bear any evidence of authenticity, extend so far as the date of Moses; and from the representation which they make in reference to the times of their earliest date, the evidence can scarcely be resisted that the world was then in a state of infancy.

The effort has, however, been made by scepticism, to discredit the Mosaic testimony in reference to the date of creation, as being entirely too modern; and the aid of science has been summoned to combat the statements of Scripture. Geologists, in modern times, have pretended to discover, from the structure of the earth, that it must have existed long anterior to the date of Moses. As described in the language of Cowper:—

"Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That he who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age."

This argument from geology is at once an evidence of the weakness and presumption of human reason. Suppose all the learned geologists in the world were to agree, that, according to the time occupied in the formation of the strata of the earth, in all parts where the examination has been made, and the date of the formation ascertained, the date of creation should be fixed six thousand years before the date of Moses, what reliance could be placed on this description of evidence? Let the philosopher dig his fossil from the earth, or rend the granite from the mountain; let him examine its structure and analyze its essence, and calculate the time requisite for its formation by the action of fire and water, and what will be the strength of his argument? How easily may he be met by the Christian, and told that God might have formed and arranged all those particles just as they are, at the birth of creation. This simple proposition, bearing upon its face the evidence of its truth, shall scatter to the winds the boasted argument of the philosopher. Creation, in all its parts, had a beginning; men, trees, and plants, no more certainly than rocks. Man was not made first an infant, but he appeared at once in the maturity and perfection of his powers. The plants and trees did not originally commence as seeds in the earth, but they were formed in a mature state. Why might we not build a similar argument from the folds and circles apparent in the wood, when the tree is opened for the inspection of its internal structure? From this examination the naturalist might decipher the age of the stately oak or cedar; but may we not suppose that a tree of similar species, a few days after the birth of creation, would have presented a structure in its parts similar to what was afterwards formed by the same species, in passing by a regular process of years to maturity? Might not the same be the case with rocks and fossil remains? May not God have formed the substance at once of precisely such character as would afterwards result from a long-continued process of precipitation and crystallization? And where, then, is the argument of the geologist? It is surprising that any one should attach the least importance to an argument upon this subject, founded upon geology. But even if the argument could not be silenced in the manner above specified, revelation has nothing to fear from the science of geology; for the learned Cuvier has satisfactorily shown, that the discoveries of geology only tend to confirm the Bible history. Thus the Mosaic account of creation stands vindicated and established as the only accredited record of the origin of man and the world we inhabit.

III. THE EXTENT of creation is the next point to be considered.

Before we commence our inquiries concerning the things produced by creation, according to the account with which we are furnished, it

may not be amiss to mention one or two questions, rather curious than useful, which have frequently been agitated in connection with this subject.

First; we are asked, whether the "six days" mentioned by Moses are to be taken literally, or for periods of an indefinite but more extensive duration? It has been argued, in opposition to the literal interpretation, that for the regular formation of the earth a greater length of time was necessary in passing from fluidity to the state of solidity, and the peculiar structure to which it must have attained in the days of Moses; and besides, the stupendous works produced seem naturally to require a greater length of time for their completion.

To all this it may be replied, that the infinite power of God could have accomplished the whole work, however complicated and stupendous, just as easily in an hour as in a thousand years; therefore, to speak of a great length of time being requisite for perfecting the work of God, seems inconsistent with the correct view of his infinite perfections.

Again; it would be unaccountably singular, if, in the plain narrative and detailed account of creation, we are to understand the word day in a figurative sense, when it is everywhere else in the Bible, in the narrative style, to be taken literally. When we notice the distinct manner in which the day is defined as "the evening and the morning," if the term were not understood literally, we could scarcely vindicate the inspired historian from an intention to mislead.

A second question of great interest to many minds, though perhaps more entirely speculative than the one above named, is this:—Are we to suppose that Moses gives an account of the entire creation of God; or merely of our world, and those worlds with which we are more or less connected, while many other systems and worlds, throughout the immensity of space, may have been created for perhaps millions of ages anterior to that date?

On the one hand it has been said, that to suppose the Almighty to have remained alone, a solitary Being amid immensity, from all eternity, till a few thousand years ago, without once putting forth his creative energies, does not comport with a rational view of the wonder-working Jehovah.

Again; it is argued, that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," at the birth of creation; and that, as we may conclude from the history of the fall, the angels must have been created some time previous to the Mosaic creation, that sufficient time may be allowed for their apostasy and subsequent early attack upon man in Paradise.

To all this, it has been replied, first, that however long the period which we suppose creation to have commenced previous to the "six days" of Moses, still, if it had a commencement at all, there must have been an eternity before it commenced, and, therefore, the Deity must have existed alone, just as long as if nothing had been created till the "six days" specified by Moses; unless we say that one eternity is longer than another, which is absurd. Again; with regard to the angels rejoicing at the birth of creation, it is replied, that they might have been created on the first or second day, or among the first of God's works, and so have been ready to rejoice as they saw the different parts of creation rising up after them. As to their having had time to fall from their first estate, and appear so early in Paradise to seduce our first parents, it is replied, that none can tell how suddenly they may have rebelled and been expelled from heaven, or how long man may have existed in Paradise before he was visited by the tempter. Upon so difficult a question, we would scarce volunteer an opinion. This much, at least, seems clear, that the entire system of which our world forms a part, was created in the "six days."

Again; it has been asked, is creation limited in extent, or is it spread out infinitely throughout the immensity of space? To this, we may be allowed to reply, that as creation must be finite in its different parts, it cannot be infinite in the aggregate; for infinity cannot be made up of finite parts; therefore, whatever we may say as to the unlimited nature of simple space, we conclude that the creation of God must be limited in its extent. At the same time that we avow the belief that the creation of God is not absolutely unlimited in extent, we must also admit that we have abundant reason to infer that the works of God are vast and extensive. This world of ours is only a speck, compared with the numerous and extensive orbs connected with our own system. How exceedingly small, then, must it appear, when we embrace in our contemplation those numerous systems which we may suppose to be spread out amid the vast expanse around us. To suppose that the Creator had formed so great a number of mighty globes for no grand and important purpose, would directly impeach his wisdom; therefore, the reasonable inference is, that they are peopled by an innumerable multitude of intelligent beings, brought into existence by the power of Omnipotence, for the wise and good purpose of showing forth the perfections and glory of him who "fillet all in all."

But we would now inquire more particularly concerning the INTELLIGENT part of creation. So far as our information has extended, the intelligent creation may all be embraced in two classes, — *Angels* and *Men*. The Bible furnishes some account of the history, character,

and employment of these two classes of beings; and we will endeavor to ascertain, to some extent, the important information within our reach on this interesting theme.

(I.) ANGELS. The term *angel* is from the Greek *angelos*, and signifies, primarily, not a nature, but an *office*. It means a *messenger*, or one sent on an embassy.

But the term is very generally used in Scripture to denote a superior order of intelligences inhabiting the heavenly regions. Here, in the very threshold of the subject, we are met by a sceptical objection. Some have even denied the very existence of such beings. In the 23d chapter and 8th verse of the Acts, we learn that the Sadducees denied the existence of angels and spirits. This ancient heresy has had its advocates in almost every age of the world, even among professed believers in revelation. As the Scriptures in numerous passages speak of angels as intelligent and real beings, those who have denied their real existence have been compelled to explain all these passages in a figurative sense. Thus, when unholy angels are spoken of, we are told that nothing is implied but evil principles or unholy thoughts; and when holy angels are spoken of, we are told that nothing is meant but good principles or holy thoughts. To such as make thus free with their Bibles, and entirely subvert, by so palpable an absurdity, the plainest declarations of Scripture, we would only say, go on, if you choose. If the plain account of Scripture does not convince you of the real existence of angels, to reason with you would be perfectly useless. Indeed, if the entire Bible history of the existence and doings of angels is an allegory or figure, we may as well discard the whole volume of revelation, as an idle dream or a silly fable.

From the Bible we learn that there are two descriptions of angels, — *fallen* or *unholy* spirits, and *holy* or *good* spirits. We would inquire briefly concerning each.

1. OF UNHOLY ANGELS. That these, as they proceeded from the hand of the Creator, were both holy and happy beings, we may clearly infer from the Divine character. He who is perfectly holy and good could not have produced unholy and miserable beings. His nature forbids it. In confirmation of this truth, we read in the first of Genesis, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was *very good*.” Well may we be assured that every creature, as it first came from the creating hand, was free from the least taint of moral evil. That these evil angels were once holy and happy, and fell from that exalted state, is clearly taught in the following passages: — John viii. 44. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and *abode*

not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." Jude 6. "And the angels which *kept not their first estate*, but *left their own habitation*, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." 2 Pet. ii. 4. "For if God spared not the angels that *sinned*, but *cast them down to hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

From these texts we learn that the devil "abode not in the truth," (implying that he was once in it,) and that the sinning angels have left their original habitation, and are now dwellers in the regions of darkness. These are the plain scriptural facts.

The question has often been asked, how came they to sin? There has been much curious speculation in endeavoring to account for the origin of moral evil. That the angels were under a law, is clear from the fact that they sinned. And if under a law which it was possible for them to violate, they must have been in a state of trial and accountability to God. With all these facts in reference to their condition before us, we see no more difficulty in accounting for their fall, than for the fall of man, except that no foreign tempter could have seduced the former. Here we are asked, how could they fall into sin without being first tempted? And how could they be tempted, when, as yet, there was nothing evil in the universe? This much we may say in their case:

First; that they did sin and fall, the Scriptures declare.

Second; that there was no evil being in the universe to tempt them to sin, we may clearly infer from the Scriptures.

But how it was that they sinned without being tempted; or, if self-tempted, how they could have originated the temptation within their own nature, which as yet was holy, perhaps we cannot fully comprehend; but the facts are revealed, and we are compelled to believe them. Some light, however, may be reflected upon this subject, when we remember that the possibility of sinning is essential to a state of accountability. And, therefore, to say that God could not make it possible for angels to sin, without first creating moral evil, would be to say, that God could not create a moral accountable agent, which would be alike irreconcilable with the Divine character and the Bible testimony. Having premised these things, in reference to the fall of angels, we would now inquire concerning their *nature, employment, and destiny*.

(1.) THEIR NATURE. That they are *spiritual* beings, is evident from the Scriptures: "He maketh his angels spirits;" but to comprehend the precise manner in which these spiritual essences exist, is, with us, impossible.

That they are *unholy* and *unhappy* is also clearly manifest from the place of their present habitation ; they are said to be “ reserved in chains under darkness ;” and to have been “ cast down to *tartarus* or *hell*.” As hell is represented to be their principal abode, and that by way of punishment for their sin, we see that they are in a state of torment ; but we are not to infer that they are absolutely confined to their prison. This, the history of the fall of man, as well as many other parts of the Scriptures, contradicts. They are capable of visiting our world, and perhaps other parts of the universe ; but wherever they may be, they are still “ unclean spirits, seeking rest and finding none.” They cannot escape from their wretchedness.

(2.) EMPLOYMENT. The Bible teaches us something concerning the employment of these spirits.

First. *They are sometimes permitted to afflict the bodies of men.*

This we learn from the history of Job. Satan was the agent by whom he was grievously afflicted with disease. We learn the same from the many diseased persons in the days of our Saviour, said to be possessed of devils.

It has been alleged, it is true, that these were not really and literally possessed of devils, but that they were diseased with epilepsy, palsy, madness, &c. ; and that they were figuratively said to be “ possessed of devils.” To this we would reply, in the language of Dr. Campbell, of Scotland : “ When we find mention made of the number of demons in particular possessions, their actions so expressly distinguished from those of the men possessed, conversations held by the former in regard to the disposal of them after their expulsion, and accounts given how they were actually disposed of ; when we find diseases and passions ascribed peculiarly to them, and similitudes taken from the conduct which they usually observe, it is impossible to deny their existence, without admitting that the sacred historians were either deceived themselves with regard to them, or intended to deceive their readers.”

Second. *They are permitted to exercise an evil influence over the minds and hearts of men*, as appears from the following passages : — Eph. vi. 12. “ For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Rev. xx. 7, 8. “ And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison ; and shall go out to deceive the nations.” 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. “ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” In Eph. ii. 2, Satan is called “ the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” In 2 Cor. ii. 11, St.

Paul says, "we are not ignorant of his devices;" and in 1 Pet. v. 8, he is said to be "a roaring lion, walking about, and seeking whom he may devour."

From these Scriptures we learn that evil spirits are endeavoring, by diligent and persevering effort, to destroy the souls of men. But for our encouragement be it known, that they can only go the length of their chain. They can tempt, but they cannot coerce us to sin; and we are told to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us."

(3.) **THEIR DESTINY.** We learn from the Scriptures, that these evil spirits are "reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Again; the place of "everlasting fire," to which the wicked are to be sentenced at judgment, is said to be "prepared for the devil and his angels." From all which, we infer that, though they are now in torment, they are reserved for the judgment, when a more dismal doom awaits them. For them there is no redemption, no mercy, no hope.

The question has been asked, why might not provision have been made for their recovery? It is enough to know, that God, who always does right, has passed them by. They sinned against light and knowledge. Each stood or fell for himself alone. And while the justice of God shall be displayed in their eternal destruction, his goodness is no more impeached than it will be in the punishment of wicked men. In reference to both classes, it may be said, they had a fair trial, but they have chosen the evil, and must "eat the fruit of their doings."

2. **HOLY ANGELS.** We come in the next place to inquire concerning holy angels. In reference to them, various items of information may be gained from the Bible.

(1.) We speak of their *character* and *condition*.

First. *They are possessed of a high degree of intelligence and wisdom.* In 2 Sam. xiv. 17, we find the woman of Tekoah speaking to David as follows: 'As an angel of God, so is my lord the king to *discern* good and bad.' Their superior intelligence may be inferred, 1. From their spirituality. They are not clogged by the frailties of weak and perishing bodies. 2. From the place of their abode. They "ever behold the face of God" in glory, and dwell amid the effulgence of heavenly light. 3. From their long observation and experience. For multiplied ages, they have been gazing in sweet contemplation on the unfolding attributes of Deity, and winging their unwearied flight to various and distant parts of heaven's dominions, to execute the Divine command, and witness the wonders of the Divine administration. To what lofty heights must they be elevated in knowledge and wisdom! Subjects

the most mysterious to the strongest intellect of man, may all be spread out to the view of a seraph with the clearness of the light of day.

Second. *They are holy beings.* In Matt. xxv. 31, they are called "the holy angels;" and that they have never departed, in the least, from the path of rectitude, we infer from the petition in the Lord's prayer: "Thy will be done on earth, *as it is in heaven.*" Again; we infer their holiness from the place of their residence. No unclean thing can enter heaven; but, for at least six thousand years, they have been veiling their faces before the throne, and crying out, with reverential humility, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts."

Third. *They are possessed of great activity and strength.* In Ps. ciii. 20, we read, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that *excel in strength.*" It is true they derive all their strength from Jehovah, but he has endued them with astonishing power. The destroying angel smote the first-born in the Egyptian families; and some of the most signal judgments of God have been executed by angelic ministers. Again; with what astonishing velocity, may we suppose, they can transport themselves from world to world! They are represented as flying on wings, and as they are purely spiritual in their nature, we may suppose that they can fly with the velocity of thought. We have an instance of this in the ninth chapter of Daniel. When Daniel commenced his prayer, the angel Gabriel was commanded to fly swiftly from heaven, and ere the supplication was closed, he touched Daniel, "about the time of the evening oblation."

Fourth. *They possess uninterrupted happiness.* This we infer from the holiness of their nature, as well as from their constant communion with God in the climes of bliss. They can have no remorse for the past, no fearful apprehensions of the future. They drink immortal joys from the pure fount of bliss, and feast forever on the enrapturing visions of the Divine glory.

(2.) We would next inquire concerning their *employment*.

First. *They are used as agents in the affairs of Divine Providence.* In reference to this, Milton has said,

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

An instance of angelic agency in the affairs of Providence is seen in the book of Daniel, x. 13:—"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one-and-twenty days, but lo! Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." But one of the most striking instances of the power of an angelic minister is, perhaps, the destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib, who had defied the living God. 2 Kings xix. 35.

"It came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." It has been supposed that this destruction was caused by the pestilential wind so fatal in the East; but if so, the angel was the agent used by Providence in bringing the wind, at the time, as an instrument of death, more terrible than the sword.

Second. *In the next place, holy angels are used as ministering spirits to the saints.*

1. *In revealing to them the Divine will.* As instances of this, we have the cases of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. The revelation of the prophetic history of the church was made to St. John, in Patmos, through the ministry of an angel; but in this case, the angel was the departed spirit of one of the prophets.

2. *They watch over the saints to preserve them from evil.* In Ps. xci. 10, 12, we read, "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give his *angels* charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." And in Ps. xxxiv. 7, we read, "The *angel* of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." In Matt. xviii. 10, our Saviour says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Again, in Heb. i. 14, we read: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

The ministry of angels to the saints is fully taught in the above passages. We are not, however, to infer, that they are to preserve the saints from every calamity of life; for afflictions and trials are necessary for the perfecting of the saints, for the maturing of their graces, and fitting them for glory. But they are about our path continually. They are with us when we sleep and when we are awake, to preserve us from evil, and to encircle us with an invisible wall of protection.

3. *They convey the souls of the saints to the mansions of bliss.* They attend them through life as their guard and protection, commissioned from their heavenly Father, to comfort them in distress, to deliver them from their enemies, and accompany them in all their weary pilgrimage; but when the hour of death arrives, they wait around the expiring saint to bear his spirit home to God. This is beautifully illustrated in Luke xvi. 22: when Lazarus died, it is said, "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We look upon death as a scene of sorrow and distress; but only let the veil that hides from our view the invisible

world be removed, and we would see, in the presence of the dying Christian, angelic bands, with the sweet melody of heavenly harps, comingling with the sobs and groans of weeping friends, and softly whispering, "Sister spirit, come away." Truly may we say, "The chamber where the good man meets his fate, is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

4. But, lastly, *they shall minister to the saints at the last day, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.* The Lord "shall send forth his angels with a mighty sound of a trumpet, to gather together his elect" from the four quarters of the earth, and by them shall all the saints "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air."

Much more might be said, but we have given a faint outline of the condition and employment of the angelic intelligences, as revealed in the Scriptures. How noble and exalted a portion are these celestial beings, of the wonderful works of the Great Creator! How large and extended views must they have of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God! How profound their adoration, and how *increasingly so*, as they continually witness the beautiful developments of love and power in the wide universe of God's creation and providence! How glorious is their employment! Day and night they are fulfilling their Maker's high behests, not as a dull task, but as a sweet and living pleasure. Lord, aid us, that *we* may "do thy will on earth, as the angels do it in heaven!"

(II.) MAN, *in his primitive state.* After the Creator had formed the inferior parts of sublunary creation, Man, the noblest and most exalted being belonging to earth, was next produced. In turning our attention to the investigation of his character and condition, there are several points of interest presenting themselves to our view.

1. *His nature was two-fold—material and immaterial*; or, in other words, he had a body and a soul. His body was "formed of the dust of the ground;" and was material, like the earth whence it was taken. But his soul was immaterial; in this respect, like the God from whom it proceeded.

The question has been asked, whether the soul of man was properly created, or was it merely an emanation from the Deity? The former opinion is more in accordance with the Scriptures, and more generally adopted. To suppose that the soul was not created, in the proper sense of the word, would be to deny that man was a created being; for the soul is the most important part of his nature. Nay, more, it would be to deny the real existence of the soul altogether; for if it was not created, then it must be a part of God; but God is infinite, without parts, and indivisible; therefore, the idea is absurd in itself. But could we

free the position from absurdity in that sense, difficulty would meet us from another quarter. The souls of the ungodly are to be punished with "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord;" consequently, they cannot be a spark of the Divine nature. The conclusion, then, is clear, that we must either admit that God created the soul of man out of nothing, or deny its real existence altogether.

2. *In the Divine image.* The inspired delineation of the primitive character of man is, that he was "in the image, and after the likeness, of God." We proceed, therefore, to inquire more particularly, in what that "image or likeness" consisted.

No theory ever advanced upon this subject is, perhaps, more absurd, than that which refers this image to the body. "God is a Spirit," without bodily shape or parts, and therefore the body of man could not, as such, be in the Divine image.

Others have made this image to consist in the dominion given to man over the works of creation; but this notion is refuted by the fact, that man received this dominion after he had been created; whereas, he was made in the image of God.

In endeavoring to ascertain in what this image consisted, we cannot fix upon one single quality, and say that it consisted in that alone, but we shall find several particulars in which it consisted.

(1.) *Spirituality* is the first we shall name. God is called "the Father of spirits," doubtless in allusion to man's resemblance to his Creator in the spirituality of his nature. In Acts xvii. 29, we read, "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

The argument of the apostle here, is evidently based upon man's resemblance to God in spirituality. The argument is this;—as man is a spiritual being, if he be the offspring of God, then God must be a spiritual being; consequently, the Godhead cannot be a material substance "like unto gold, or silver, or stone." Although there is this resemblance in spirituality, yet we cannot say that the spiritual essence of Deity is not vastly superior, in refinement and purity, to that of the most exalted creature. But the comprehension of a spiritual essence transcends our utmost powers.

(2.) *Knowledge* is the next particular in which we shall notice that this image consisted. This we prove from Col. iii. 10, reading as follows: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Here is a plain allusion to the image of God in which man was originally made. Upon this passage, Macknight adds these words: "Even as, in the first creation, God made

man after his own image." In respect to the degree of knowledge with which man was originally endued, commentators have widely differed. Some have represented him, in this respect, almost in a state of infancy, having nearly everything to learn; while others have exalted him almost, if not altogether, to angelic perfection. The probable truth lies between the two extremes. That man was inferior, in this respect, to the angels, we may infer from the testimony of Paul: he was made "a little *lower* than the angels." That his knowledge was exceedingly great, we may infer from the purity and perfection of his nature. Moral evil had not deranged and enervated his powers, or enshrouded him in darkness. We may also very naturally be led to the same conclusion, from his history in Paradise;—his readiness in naming appropriately the various animals presented before him, and his capability of holding converse with his Maker.

(3.) *Holiness*, or moral purity, is the next and the most important part of this image of God, which we shall notice. In Eph. iv. 24, we read, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Here the renewal of our moral nature, which in the Scriptures generally is represented as a recovery from the polluting consequences of sin, is said to be "after God," that is, after the image of God; and this image is said to consist in "righteousness and true holiness." That man originally possessed absolute and essential holiness, independent of God, we do not believe. None but God, the fountain of holiness, can possess this quality in an independent and supreme sense. Man, therefore, derived holiness from his immediate connection and direct communion with God. That such was his condition, we may confidently infer from this very fact of his communion with his God. It is also clearly implied in the sentence of absolute approval pronounced by the Creator upon his works. They were said to be "very good." Such they could not have been, if unholiness, in the least degree, attached to any of them. He who is infinitely holy himself, could not, consistently with his nature, have produced an unholy creature. The stream must partake of the nature of the fountain. Therefore, man was created, in the moral sense, "without spot or wrinkle."

(4.) *Immortality* is the last thing we shall notice in which this image consisted. This we understand to apply to the body as well as the soul of man. It relates to his entire compound nature. That man never would have died but for the introduction of sin, is the irresistible conclusion from the reasoning of St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans where he shows that "death entered into the world by sin." Again; it is implied in the original penalty of the law:—"In the day thou eatest

thereof, thou shalt surely die." Most certainly the promise is here implied that if he continued in obedience he should live. With these direct testimonies to man's original immortality before us, we can feel no inclination to dispute with those who contend that man would have died literally, whether he had sinned or not. If men choose to amuse themselves with their own fancies, in direct opposition to the plainest Scripture, we will leave them to the enjoyment of the pleasing reverie.

Again ; we may clearly infer that immortality was a part of the image of God in which man was created, from Gen. ix. 6. " Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." Now, as the heinousness of the crime of murder results from the fact that man was made in the image of God, that image must have consisted, in part, in immortality, or we cannot see the force of the reasoning.

Some have adopted the idea that the body of man was created naturally mortal, but that this natural tendency to dissolution, by a wise arrangement, was counteracted by means of the "tree of life." We confess we cannot see the scriptural authority, or the force of the reasoning, by which this theory is sustained. Even admitting that the tree of life was the medium through which God was pleased to continue the existence of man, it would not follow that he was naturally mortal, unless the terms be taken in a different acceptance from any in which they are ever used in application to man. What, I would ask, are we to understand by the natural qualities of man ? Are they not those qualities belonging to his nature by the arrangement of his Creator ? And if so, was not man secured in the possession of the immortality of his nature, as absolutely, upon the supposition that the tree of life was the medium, as he could have been in any other way ? And will it not result from this, that his immortality is just as natural, if secured through that channel, as it could be if derived from any other source ? None but God can possess immortality independently. The continuance of the existence of the soul of man, yea, even the being of angels, is just as dependent on the will, and results as really from the power of God, as the immortality of man's body could have done, supposing it to have been secured by the tree of life. Whether the Divine power by which the perpetuity of our existence is secured be exerted through the medium of the tree of life, or in any other way, it is no less really the power of God. Hence it would follow, that, even upon this supposition, the body of man was just as naturally immortal as his soul could have been. But is not the idea, that the body of man originally was *by nature* mortal, antagonistic to the general tenor of Scripture on this subject, that "*death* is the wages of *sin* ?" I cannot but think that the more scrip-

tural comment upon the "tree of life" would be, to say that it was rather a seal or pledge of the clearly implied promise of God, that man a being created naturally immortal, should, upon the condition of obedience, be continued in that state. Be this as it may, the point is clear, that man was made immortal, according to the will and power of God; and this, in part, constituted the Divine image in which he was made.

Thus have we seen that this image of God, in which man was created, embraced *spirituality, knowledge, holiness, and immortality*.

3. The last thing which we shall notice, in reference to the primeval state of man, is, that *he was constituted* HAPPY.

Formed an intellectual and spiritual essence, endued with rational faculties capable of lofty and holy exercise, and admitted into social intercourse and intimate communion with God, he shared the blessing of pure and uninterrupted felicity. Placed in a world where all was order, harmony, and beauty,—exempt from all infirmity or affliction of body, and conscious of no imbecility or imperfection of soul,—he was permitted, with undisturbed freedom of body and mind, and conscious innocence and rectitude of heart, to range the garden of Paradise, where opening flowers and unfolding beauties, sweetest odors and richest melodies, proclaimed in heavenly accent, to the eye, the ear, and every sense of man, that God, his Maker, had formed him for happiness. Thus have we faintly sketched the condition in which our race was originally placed by the Creator. Our first parents were holy and happy. Placed as man was in a garden of delights, where all was beauty, freshness, fragrance, and music, how could he have one want? Created with high capabilities of acquiring knowledge, how well rewarded would be all his inquiries! Made holy, loving God with all his soul, how sweet to him was communion with the Father of his spirit! Every act was worship; for no sin was there. As he gazed enraptured on the vaulted firmament, studded with glittering worlds, or sat in the soft light of the moon, or walked forth in the softer twilight, no doubt his soul ascended in silent or speaking gratitude to Him who had fitted up for his children so beautiful an abode. When the light of day appeared in the east, and the songs of morning burst upon his ear, man's heart would be attuned to worship, and the bowers of Paradise would resound with the notes of his grateful praise. Thus the recurrence of day and night would alike bring seasons of holy devotion. With what delighted anticipation would he look forward to the periods set apart for communion with the Holy One! He noted not the slow-moving of the hours, for he knew no suffering, no grief;—he hid not his face and wept, for as yet he knew no sin. But, alas! he fell from this glorious estate! He "forsook the fountain of living waters" and turned to an impure stream.

In an evil hour he listened to the voice of the tempter ; and sweet must have been his charming to cause man to forget the voice of his Father, God, saying to him, " In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die ! "

We would now, in conclusion, take a general survey of the material and intellectual universe, as spoken into being by the omnific fiat of Jehovah ; and we would ask, what was the grand object of God, in calling into being this stupendous fabric of creation ? It could not have been requisite for the promotion of his own essential happiness, for he was perfectly and independently happy in the possession of his own inimitable perfections. The great moving principle in the Deity, which resulted in the work of creation, we are led to believe, from all that we know of the Divine character and administration, was benevolence or love. He designed to exhibit his own perfections, and to show forth his own declarative glory, in the happiness of millions of intelligent existences. Infinite wisdom saw that happiness would be promoted by creation ; infinite love delighted in this noble end, and infinite power spoke the word, and a universe appeared in being. Myriads of sentient existences have thus been permitted to taste the streams of bliss, and all that fill the station assigned them may rejoice forever in ascriptions of praise to Him " in whom they live, and move, and have their being."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE VI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what sense is <i>creation</i> properly understood ?</p> <p>2. How did the pagan philosophers understand it ?</p> <p>3. How is the eternity of matter shown to be absurd ?</p> <p>4. How may the eternity of the world, in its organized state, be disproved ?</p> <p>5. What is the date of creation, according to the Septuagint ?</p> <p>6. What, according to the Hebrew, shown by Bishop Usher ?</p> <p>7. Which chronology is the most probably correct ?</p> <p>8. What philosophical objection is started to the Mosaic date ?</p> <p>9. How may it be refuted ?</p> <p>10. What are the objections to understanding the " six days " mentioned by Moses, <i>literally</i> ?</p> <p>11. What are the arguments for the <i>literal</i> interpretation ?</p> <p>12. What are the reasons for supposing that the entire creation of God was not included in the account of Moses ?</p> <p>13. What is the reply to these arguments ?</p> | <p>14. May we reasonably suppose creation to be <i>infinite in extent</i> ?</p> <p>15. Why not ?</p> <p>16. In what two classes may the intelligent creation be embraced ?</p> <p>17. In what sense is the term <i>angel</i> to be understood ?</p> <p>18. What <i>two classes</i> of angels are there ?</p> <p>19. What is the evidence that there are fallen angels ?</p> <p>20. How is their apostasy accounted for ?</p> <p>21. What is the nature of their being ?</p> <p>22. What is the evidence that they are unhappy ?</p> <p>23. What is their employment ?</p> <p>24. What is the evidence that they may afflict the body ?</p> <p>25. What is the evidence that they afflict and seduce the soul ?</p> <p>26. What is the nature of their destiny ?</p> <p>27. What is the nature of holy angels ?</p> <p>28. What is the evidence of their intelligence ?</p> <p>29. Of their holiness ?</p> <p>30. Of their activity and strength ?</p> <p>31. Of their happiness ?</p> |
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| 32. What is the evidence of their agency in the affairs of Providence ? | 42. What is the evidence that it embraced spirituality ? |
| 33. What is the proof that they are ministering spirits, in making known the Divine will ? | 43. That it embraced knowledge ? |
| 34. In watching over, and preserving the saints from evil ? | 44. That it embraced holiness ? |
| 35. In conveying them home to heaven ? | 45. That it embraced immortality ? |
| 36. In scenes and events of the last day ? | 46. Did this immortality apply to the body also ? |
| 37. What was the two-fold nature originally conferred on man ? | 47. Do we suppose that the body was made naturally immortal ? |
| 38. Are we to suppose that his soul was created out of nothing ? | 48. What may we suppose was the design of the "tree of life ?" |
| 39. Why so ? | 49. What is the evidence that man was originally happy ? |
| 40. Did the Divine image in which man was created relate to his bodily form ? | 50. What was the grand design of the Almighty, in bringing creation into being ? |
| 41. Why not ? | |

LECTURE VII.

THE FALL OF MAN.

THE Bible is a rich treasury of historic truth. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read an account of our own origin, and of the birth of creation. But scarcely have we time to pause and contemplate the beauty and grandeur of the handiwork of the Supreme Architect, till we are led by the inspired record to look upon one of the most melancholy scenes ever presented to the view of man. In the third chapter of Genesis, we are furnished with the history of the fall of man,—the apostasy of the first pair from original purity and happiness. The Mosaic account of this event is substantially this:—that man was placed in the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it. In this garden were two peculiar trees, the one called the “tree of life,” and the other “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Of the fruit of the latter Adam was commanded not to eat, and the command was enforced by the announcement of the penalty,—“In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Through the temptation of the serpent, Eve, and, through her, Adam, were induced to disobey the command, by eating the fruit of that tree, in consequence of which they were expelled from the garden, and the sentence of death, together with other maledictions, was denounced against them.

I. In turning our attention to this scriptural account of the fall, we inquire, first, is this a *literal account* of events that really took place, or is it merely an *allegorical representation*? Infidels, who reject the Bible, of course look upon it as nothing but a fictitious story; but that professed Christians should view this solemn record as a painted allegory, is a matter of no little surprise; and yet, some, at the same time that they express a reverence for the Bible, make thus free with its contents.

That this history should be interpreted literally, we infer, first, from the fact that it is regularly connected with a continuous and plain narrative detail of facts. Now, to select from a regularly conducted narrative, a particular portion, as allegorical, when all the other parts in the connection are admitted to be plain narrative, is contrary to all the rules of interpretation. If we may make thus free with the third chapter of

Genesis, why not the first; and deny the reality of the creation? Why not make a similar disposition of the history of Noah, of Moses, or even of Christ? Indeed, if we are authorized to treat the plain historic record of the Bible thus uncereceremoniously, we can place little confidence in anything it contains.

But there is a second argument for the literal interpretation of the account under consideration. If we view it as an allegory, we must set aside the authority of the New Testament; for, in several places it alludes to the history of the fall as a real transaction. Matt. xix. 4, 5, our Saviour says, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." Here, although our Lord does not quote immediately from the history of the fall, yet he quotes a portion of the same continuous narrative; consequently, he must have viewed it as real history. In 2 Cor. xi. 3, St. Paul says, "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Here the allusion is so plain that we cannot resist the conviction that the apostle intended to refer to a real transaction.

But there is another passage so positive and definite as to settle the question with all who will acknowledge the inspiration of St. Paul:—1 Tim. ii. 13, 14. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Thus do we perceive that we are compelled to admit the literal history of the fatal illapse of man, as recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, or discard our confidence in the Bible.

II. In the second place, we inquire concerning *the propriety of the Divine administration, as connected with the circumstances of the fall of man.*

1. It is asked, could not the Almighty, who certainly foresaw the apostasy of man, have prevented it? And if so, how can we reconcile it with Divine goodness, that he did not thus interpose? I am persuaded that this difficulty has not only been tauntingly urged by the infidel, but it has presented itself to the mind of many a candid inquirer after truth; therefore, it merits some serious consideration.

In the first place, that God foresaw the fall, we firmly believe; for he seeth "the end from the beginning."

In the second place, that he could have prevented it, we freely admit; for God can do anything which does not imply an absurdity, and which is consistent with his own perfections. We do not suppose that Deity was necessarily compelled to create man originally. The fact that he

did not perform this work till a few thousand years ago, is sufficient evidence that he might have suspended it even till now, had he seen proper. If, then, he was not compelled to create man at first, but acted with perfect freedom, it would follow, that he might still continue to exercise the same freedom, and unmake what he had made, or so change it as to constitute it something entirely different. So far, then, as the simple question of potentiality is concerned, the Deity could have prevented the fall. He could have prevented it by omitting to create man. He could have prevented it by making man a stock or a stone, or anything else beside a moral agent. But that he could have prevented it consistently with his own attributes, without destroying the moral agency of man, is what we believe never can be proved. Seeing, then, that the only way by which God could have rendered the apostasy of man impossible, was, not to have made him a moral and accountable agent, the question then amounts to this : was it better, upon the whole, that moral agents should be brought into being, or not ? Before the Divine administration can be impeached, as improper or inconsistent with goodness, it must be shown either that it was improper to create moral agents, or that the possibility of transgressing is not essential to the character of a moral agent. That it was improper to create moral agents, is a position contradicted by the fact that God did create such beings. This must be admitted by all who acknowledge their own existence, and that they have been brought into being by a Creator, whether they believe the Bible or not. Therefore, we are compelled to admit, that in the judgment of God, who alone is infinitely wise and capable of surveying the whole ground, more good than evil would result from the creation of intelligent, accountable beings ; and that therefore it was better, upon the whole, that such beings should be created. In the next place, that the possibility of apostasy is essential to the character of a moral and accountable agent, is easily shown in the following manner :—1. A moral agent implies a capacity for performing moral action. 2. Moral action implies a law by which its character is determined. 3. A law for the government of moral action must necessarily be such as may either be obeyed or disobeyed by the subject ; otherwise, there can be no moral quality, no virtue or vice, no praise or blame, attached to obedience or disobedience ; and this would destroy the character of the moral agent. Thus it is clear that the power to obey or disobey is essential to the character of a moral agent ; consequently, God could not have prevented the possibility of the apostasy and fall of man without destroying his moral agency.

2. The *nature of the prohibition* made to Adam has been considered by some as a ground of serious complaint against the Divine adminis-

tration. That the fruit of one of the trees of Paradise should be interdicted by the Almighty, has been represented as absurd, and treated with ridicule. This solemn transaction has been made the subject of many "a foolborn jest" by the captious and profane. It would be well for shortsighted and fallible creatures, before they launch forth with such presumptuous arrogance and audacious raillery, with much humility and honesty of heart, more carefully to examine so serious a matter.

In reference to this prohibition, it may be observed that the objection is not that man was placed under a law; the propriety of this, all who acknowledge that he was constituted a moral agent must admit; but the ground of complaint is against the peculiar character of the law. "What harm could there be in eating an apple," it is asked, "that our first parents should be placed under so strict and unreasonable a restraint?"

To this we would reply, that we can see no just reason for complaint, because the prohibition was what has been termed, not a moral, but a positive precept. The chief difference in these is, that the reason of a positive precept is not seen by us, whereas, in a moral precept, we perceive, in the very nature of the command, something of its propriety.

In reference to moral precepts, it must be admitted that the reasonableness of the duty is not in every case equally obvious. May we not, therefore, infer, that, in positive precepts, a sufficient reason for them may exist in the mind of God, which, in consequence of the weakness of our understandings, we cannot perceive. That our minds do not perceive the reason upon which a command is founded, cannot possibly be an evidence that no such reason exists, with any who admit the finitude of the human understanding. Therefore, to object to the prohibition as unreasonable, merely because we do not perceive the reason upon which it is founded, is seen to be fallacious.

Again; even if we were to admit that there was no previous reason, in the nature of things, for the particular precept given to Adam, and that another precept might just as well have been substituted for it, how can we see any valid objection to the Divine administration upon this supposition? Is not the ground of all obligation, whether connected with a positive or moral precept, founded upon the will of God? For instance, the duty of industry is said to be moral in its character, because we can perceive some propriety in it, even in the absence of a command. But is it not clear that our obligation to be industrious is founded upon the command of God? In the absence of the known will of God in the case, I might be led, from mere choice or policy, to the exercise of industry, but I could not feel that I was bound to be industrious, and that a failure would be a crime. Hence we conclude, that,

as obligation rests not on the *nature* of the duty itself, but on the fact that our Creator has commanded it, the obligation to obey is just as great in a positive as in a moral precept.

In turning our attention to the law given to our first parents, so far from discovering anything objectionable in the particular prohibition, we confess that it appears to us more reasonable and better adapted to the grand design for which it was given, than a moral precept could have been. It is evident that the law was given as a test of man's fidelity and allegiance to God. He was created an intelligent being, and endued with free agency. As such, a law calculated to test his submission to God was perfectly suited to his condition, being designed to show forth, in the obedience of the creature, the supreme authority and glory of the Creator. The question for us to determine, therefore, is this: was a positive precept, such as was given to man, calculated to test his obedience? It appears evident to us, that such a command as had nothing to influence its observance but the authority of God, was, of all that could have been given, the best test of obedience. Had the Almighty commanded Adam to speak the truth, or to be affectionate to his wife, his observance of a moral precept of this kind could not have been a proof of his allegiance to his Maker, for the simple reason that the understanding, unimpaired by sin, might have discovered such propriety and fitness in the very nature of the precept as to lead to obedience merely for the sake of its advantages. But God designed that man should acknowledge the supreme authority of his Creator; therefore, he gave him a law affording no argument for its observance but the authority of God, that it might thus be evinced, that, if man kept the law, he did it for no other reason than because God had commanded it; thereby acknowledging the Divine government and control under which he was placed.

Again; the propriety of this precept, when considered as a *test* of obedience, may be seen in its simplicity. A law upon which so much depended should be such as could easily be understood and remembered. Had an extended system of intricate forms been laid down, the offending subject might have pleaded, as an excuse, the difficulty of remembering or understanding every part of the command; but here there can be no plea of the sort; there is but one simple command;—the fruit of one tree is interdicted, and that so specifically designated that there can be no mistake.

Once more; had the command imposed a heavy burden upon man, the offending subject might have pleaded, as a palliation, the severity of the requisition; but here we see no difficult task imposed. It is only abstinence from one, out of the many trees of Eden; and the very man-

ner in which the command is issued seems strongly to urge obedience, by a direct allusion to the Divine goodness intermingled therewith: — “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” How appropriate this, as a test of obedience! It has nothing but the Divine authority to sustain it. It imposes no oppressive burden; but, in its very presentation, is mingled with love.

3. The circumstances of the temptation have been caricatured, with no sparing hand, by men who have appeared determined to amuse themselves at all hazards. A little attention to this subject will be enough, we think, to satisfy the unprejudiced that there is no just ground here for arraigning the Divine administration.

Some have thought it strange that God should permit man to be tempted at all. But a temptation to fall, either internal or external, seems to be essential to his character as a probationer. When every inducement is on the side of obedience, the subject must partake of the character of a machine, and there can be no reward for obedience. Perhaps there was this difference between the apostasy of man and that of the fallen angels, — the latter originated the temptation within their own nature, whilst the former was tempted from without. It is not essential from what source the temptation originates, but a temptation appears to be necessarily connected with a state of trial. Without it, “what proof can be given of firm allegiance?” As it is impossible for us to know that man would not have originated a temptation within his own nature, even if Satan had not been permitted to attack him, we cannot assail the Divine administration as cruel, for permitting that attack. Of this much we may be well assured, — the temptation was not irresistible. God required obedience; and he gave ability for the same. To have gone further would have destroyed the accountability of man, and deranged the principles of the Divine government.

Against the literal account of the temptation, it has been said, that it is unreasonable to suppose that a “serpent,” or any “beast of the field,” should be sufficiently malicious and sagacious to undertake and succeed in the seduction of man. It is a sufficient reply to this, to know that, according to the Scriptures, the prime actor in this temptation was Satan, a fallen spirit. This we learn from various allusions. In Rev. xii. 9, we read of “that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.” And in evident allusion to the seduction of man, we read concerning the Devil, in John viii. 44, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth.”

If an objection be made from the absurdity or impossibility of a ser-

pent or beast of the field uttering articulate sounds, we reply, that although such creatures may not naturally possess this power, yet it is impossible for us to prove that God might not permit Satan to exercise it through them; and so the objection falls.

Again; it has been objected, that the serpent, of all animals, is the most inappropriate to be selected as an instrument of this seduction. To which we reply, that we know but little with regard to what the serpent originally was; but, from what the Scriptures inform us, we have good reason to believe that he was the most appropriate animal that could have been selected. He was not a creeping reptile, but a "beast of the field;" and the most subtle among them.

Upon this subject, Mr. Watson says: — "We have no reason at all to suppose, as it is strangely done almost uniformly by commentators, that this animal had the serpentine form, in any mode or degree at all, before his transformation. That he was then degraded to a reptile to go 'upon his belly,' imports, on the contrary, an entire alteration and loss of the original form, — a form of which it is clear no idea can now be conceived."

We may conclude from what has been said, that, as a temptation of some kind was necessary, that the fidelity of man might be tested, there is no just ground for cavil at the account of this matter, as recorded by Moses.

4. The PENALTY annexed to the Adamic law has been made a ground of complaint, as being excessively rigorous, and entirely disproportionate to the offence. That we may understand this subject, it will be necessary to take into the account the true condition of man as an accountable being, the nature of the authority by which he was bound, and the true character of his offence. When these things are all duly considered, we think it will be apparent that the penalty of death, which has been referred to as so excessively severe, was truly appended to the law, in mercy.

First, then, man, in order that he might be a proper subject of moral government, was made a rational, intelligent being, capable of understanding his duty and the reasons thereof. He was also endued with the capacity of perceiving and feeling the influence of motive. In a word, he had every attribute of a free moral agent. His duty was plainly prescribed. He was not left to feel his way amid the darkness of uncertainty or conjecture. Light flowed into his soul by a direct communication from God, with clearness and power, like the unobstructed rays of the sun. No dire necessity impelled him to transgress; for he had every faculty and ability necessary to enable him to obey. He was created "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." Such

was the condition in which he was placed, and such were the circumstances by which he was rendered accountable for his actions.

What, we inquire in the next place, was the nature of that authority by which he was bound, and to which he was held responsible? It was the authority of the infinite God, enforced by all the obligations of gratitude, as well as justice, truth, and holiness. An obligation thus high and sacred, and resting upon the authority of the infinite perfections of God, could neither be relinquished nor compromised. The honor of the eternal throne forbade it.

With this view of the subject, we ask, what was the character of the offence of man? Surely, it could not have been the trivial thing supposed by those who speak so flippantly of the mere circumstance of tasting an apple. The eating of the forbidden fruit was the external act of transgression; but the seat of the crime lay deep in the soul. There, where all had been holiness and love, every evil principle reigned in triumph:—unbelief was there; treason, rebellion, enmity, pride, lust, murder; in a word, the root of every evil passion which Satan could instigate, or which man has ever felt, was contained in the principle which actuated man in the first transgression. The authority of God was here cast off; the word of God was contradicted; allegiance to Heaven was relinquished, and the claims of gratitude entirely disregarded. How exceedingly defective must be the view of this subject taken by those who represent the first sin as a venial impropriety,—a slight aberration, of scarce sufficient magnitude to merit the notice of God!

In view, then, of all these circumstances, can we complain that the penalty of death was annexed to the law? Is it an evidence of cruelty on the part of the Lawgiver? The whole history of the case, when properly understood, presents rather an evidence of the goodness of God. The object contemplated in the affixing of a penalty to a law, in all good governments, is not primarily the punishment of the subject, but the prevention of crime. So in the command given to Adam; that he might be deterred from transgression, and thereby preserved in his pristine state of bliss, the penalty was annexed, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*.” If the prime object of the penalty was the prevention of crime, so also, the severity of the penalty, if such it may be called, originated in the Divine benevolence, which labored to make the inducements to obedience as strong as might be, without destroying the free agency and accountability of man.

Thus have we contemplated the history and circumstances of perhaps the most solemn and deeply important event connected with the history of our race, except that greater work of redemption, providing for our recovery from the miseries of the fall. The full import of the pen-

alty of death, together with the relation sustained in the transaction of the fall by Adam to his posterity, will be considered, when we investigate the doctrine of human depravity, or the effects of the fall.

We now close this lecture by one observation in reference to the date of this melancholy event. It seems that sacred chronology has not been careful to gratify curiosity in this particular. How long the first pair maintained their integrity, and drank at the fountain of unmixed happiness, we know not; but it is probable that the time was short. The "fine gold" soon became "dim," and the desolating curse soon fell, with its withering influence, upon the fair, and, till then, the smiling face of nature. But while we cast a mournful retrospect upon the wide-spread ruin entailed upon his race by the first Adam, we may, through the second Adam, hope to gain a habitation in "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE VII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what place is the history of the fall of man recorded?</p> <p>2. What is the substance of the Mosaic account of the transaction?</p> <p>3. Is this to be understood <i>literally</i> or <i>allegorically</i>?</p> <p>4. What two facts are given in evidence of the literal interpretation?</p> <p>5. Was it possible for God to have prevented the fall?</p> <p>6. How can we reconcile it with his goodness that he did not prevent it?</p> <p>7. Could he have prevented its possibility without destroying the free agency of man?</p> <p>8. How may it be shown that the possibility of apostasy is essential to the character of a moral agent?</p> <p>9. What objection has been made to the Divine administration, from the nature of the prohibition?</p> <p>10. What is the distinction between a <i>moral</i> and a <i>positive</i> precept?</p> <p>11. May we certainly know that a <i>positive</i> precept is not founded on reason?</p> <p>12. Upon what is our obligation to obey founded?</p> | <p>13. Why does it appear that a positive precept is the best test of obedience?</p> <p>14. How may the propriety of the law given to Adam as a test of obedience be argued from its simplicity?</p> <p>15. Wherein does it appear that it was presented in mercy?</p> <p>16. How could God, consistently with his mercy, permit man to be tempted?</p> <p>17. What was probably the difference between the temptation of man and that of the fallen angels?</p> <p>18. What was the prime agent in the seduction of man?</p> <p>19. Could the serpent have uttered articulate sounds? What was probably the original form of the serpent?</p> <p>20. What objection has been raised in reference to the penalty of the law?</p> <p>21. How does it appear that the first sin was not a trivial offence?</p> <p>22. What was the prime object in affixing the penalty to the law?</p> <p>23. Can you fix the precise date of the fall?</p> <p>24. Is it probable that Adam continued long in his pristine state?</p> |
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LECTURE VIII.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL OF MAN.

HAVING contemplated, in the preceding lecture, the circumstances connected with the history of the fall of man, we come now to consider its EFFECTS.

This is one of the most important subjects in theology. It presents the basis on which is predicated the whole remedial scheme of the gospel; for if the lapsed state of man be denied, his redemption must be superfluous. An erroneous view of the effects of the fall, from the very nature of the subject, would be likely to extend itself throughout the whole gospel system. Hence, the principal heresies with which the church in all ages has been infested, have originated in improper views upon this subject.

In divinity, as in all science, to start right is of vast importance; therefore, peculiar care should be exercised in endeavoring to ascertain correctly the consequences of the first apostasy of man, from which evidently springs the necessity of redemption.

In approaching this important subject, that which demands our investigation is,—

I. *The nature of the penalty attached to the Adamic law.*

Upon this subject, a great diversity of sentiment has existed. The first, and perhaps the most defective theory of all that we shall notice, is that which has been attributed to Pelagius, a Briton, who flourished about the commencement of the fifth century.

The same sentiment was adopted by Socinus of the sixteenth century; and, with little variation is held by Socinians generally of the present day.

According to this theory, *death*, the penalty of the law, is not to be understood in the full and proper sense, as implying either death *temporal*, *spiritual*, or *eternal*; but is rather to be understood figuratively, as implying a state of exposure to the Divine displeasure, expulsion from Paradise, and a subjection to ills and inconveniences such as should make the transgressor feel the evil of his sin, and might serve as a disciplinary correction, to prevent a subsequent departure from duty. But, that the body of Adam, being created naturally mortal, would have died.

whether he had sinned or not; and that his soul did not lose the Divine image and favor, though it became to some extent injured in its faculties.

A second opinion is, that the death affixed as the penalty of the law extended to both soul and body, and implied complete annihilation.

A third theory is, that the death threatened related exclusively to the body, and, consequently, that the soul is just as pure, until defiled by actual transgression, as the soul of Adam in Paradise. This was the notion of Dr. Taylor, of Norwich.

A fourth view of the subject is, that the threatened penalty implied spiritual death only, or the loss of the Divine image from the soul; and that the death of the body is only an after consequence, resulting not directly from sin, but from a merciful interposition, by which man was denied access to the tree of life.

That none of these views presents the true scriptural account of this subject, we hope to render apparent by the establishment of the following proposition, viz.: — that *the death threatened as the penalty of the Adamic law included death temporal, spiritual, and eternal.*

1. *Our first argument upon this subject is founded upon the scriptural account, containing the record of the original threatening, and of the curse subsequently denounced.* The language of the penalty is, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The language of the curse denounced upon Adam, after his transgression, is this: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The language here quoted, in which the curse is denounced upon Adam immediately subsequent to the fall, must be understood, to some extent at least, as a comment upon the threatened penalty. This we may clearly infer from the preface to the curse, "*Because* thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife," &c. Here we are plainly taught that the curse denounced is a direct consequence of the transgression; and if so, it must be embraced in the penalty; for nothing but the penalty can result directly and necessarily from the transgression. To suppose that the entire malediction, as here specified, was not embraced in the previous threatening, would be to charge the Almighty with unnecessary severity, for in strict justice, nothing could have been required more than the execution of the penalty; nor could the transgression of the law be thus directly specified,

as the cause of this curse, upon any supposition, but that the previously declared penalty demanded it. We may not only infer that this entire malediction was embraced in the penalty, but also, that, so far as the language extends, it is a comment upon the penalty itself. If the above be admitted as true, we have here a positive proof that the sorrows and afflictions of life, together with the final dissolution of the body, were embraced in the penalty. It is here declared that the very earth is cursed for the sake of man, to whom it had been given for an inheritance; that he shall lead a life of toil and sorrow, and that "to dust shall he return;" and all this because of his sin. Most evidently, then, must the death of the body have been included in the penalty.

But again; we find here, also, very conclusive proof, of an indirect and inferential kind, that spiritual death is also included. By this death is understood the loss of the Divine image and favor. Physical evil, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures and the nature of the Divine government, is understood to be the result of moral evil. Hence, to suppose that man is involved in the dreadful miseries here denounced, and yet, not the subject of such a moral defection as to deprive him of the immaculate image and favor of God, is an absurdity which, we think, can only be adopted by persons of easy faith.

2. Our next proof that the original penalty embraced death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal, is founded upon the *nature of man* to whom the law was given. The plain, common-sense interpretation of Scripture, where there is nothing in the context to oppose it, is always the best. Let any honest inquirer after truth, who has no favorite theory to sustain, take up his Bible, and read, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and endeavor to learn, from the nature of the person addressed, the character of the death specified, and what must be his conclusion? The law was here given, not to the *body* of man, previously to its union with the soul, but to man in his compound character, after his two natures had been united, so as to constitute but one person; therefore, the penalty is not denounced against the body alone, but against man in his entire nature. It was not said, "In the day thou eatest thereof" thy body "shall die;" nor thy soul "shall die;" but "thou," meaning Adam, a compound being, consisting of *soul* and *body*; "thou," in thy entire nature, "shalt die." Again, if either the soul or body had been entirely alone in the offence, there might be more plausibility in the supposition that it would be alone in the penalty; but there was a sin of the soul resulting in a bodily act of transgression; therefore, the natural inference is, that as both partook of the offence, both must be involved in the penalty. Once more; as eternal death is only a perpetuity of the sentence of death denounced against man, it would follow as

a natural consequence, that the death must be eternal unless removed; but the penalty made no provision for its own destruction,—consequently, it must have included eternal death. Thus have we seen, that, from the very nature of man to whom the law was given, we may reasonably infer that the penalty denounced against him was death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

3. In the next place, we appeal to the express declaration of the word of God, in various passages, in confirmation of the view we have taken of the import of the penalty under consideration. To an unprejudiced mind, one would think that the very phraseology of the penalty itself were enough.

Upon this subject, we have the following forcible remarks from Dr. John Dick, in his lectures: “It may be sufficient, in the present case, to repeat the words of God to Adam, without quoting other passages in confirmation of their meaning; ‘In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’ Can anything be plainer than that if he did not eat he should not die? Can we suppose that God threatened, as a consequence of transgression, what would take place in the course of nature? that Adam was deterred from disobedience by the annunciation of an event which would befall him although he performed his duty? If men will make themselves ridiculous by venting opinions stamped with folly and absurdity, let them beware of exposing their Maker to contempt.”

Upon the same subject, Mr. Watson, in his Institutes, uses the following pertinent observations: “The death threatened to Adam we conclude, therefore, to have extended to the soul of man as well as to his body, though not in the sense of annihilation; but for the confirmation of this, it is necessary to refer more particularly to the language of Scripture, which is its own best interpreter, and it will be seen that the opinion of those divines who include in the penalty attached to the first offence the very ‘fulness of death,’ as it has been justly termed, death, *bodily*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*, is not to be puffed away by sarcasm, but stands firm on inspired testimony.”

If, as we have seen, death is the penalty of the law given to Adam, is it not manifest that we exercise a freedom with the word of God for which we have no license, if we restrict the import of death within narrower limits than are assigned to it in the Scriptures themselves? In Rom. vi. 23, St. Paul declares, “For the wages of sin is death.” This is presented as a broad principle of truth. A Scripture axiom of universal application. Here is no particular kind of death specified; but the term death is used in a general and unlimited sense; then, wherever we find death in any shape or form, or of any kind, we here have

the inspired testimony, that it is the "wages of sin." We have only then to turn to the Holy Oracles still further, and inquire in what sense the term death is there used; and we have the plainest testimony, that in the same sense it is "the wages of sin;" or, in other words, results from sin as its penalty. The dissolution of the body is so frequently spoken of as death, that quotations would perhaps be superfluous. We, however, present one; 1 Cor. xv. 22, "For as in Adam all *die*, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here, the apostle is discoursing especially on the subject of the dissolution of the body, and its resurrection, and uses the term death; and represents it as taking place "in Adam," which, if it does not imply that death resulted penally from the first transgression, can have no intelligible meaning whatever. The 5th chapter to the Romans furnishes an ample comment on the penalty of the Adamic law. We find there these words: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be *dead*, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Here we may plant ourselves on the testimony of the apostle, and ask, can language be more specific—can proof be more positive? Two points are here established beyond the possibility of dispute: *first*, that death has directly resulted from the transgression of Adam; *second*, that this death is opposed to the life which is bestowed through Christ. Christ is the fountain of life in the same sense in which Adam is the source of death. We have, therefore, only to ask in what sense is Christ the source of life? Is he not the source of life, bodily, spiritual, and eternal? None can deny it without giving the lie to the apostle. And if so, it is equally clear that death in all these senses is the result, the penal result, of Adam's sin.

But still it may be inquired, have we scriptural authority for applying the term death to the loss of the Divine image from the soul, and the eternal separation of both soul and body from God? In Eph. ii. 1, we read, "And you hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." Here is only one of the many places in which spiritual death is spoken of. This is a moral destitution, or a separation of the soul from the life and love of God; and it is here spoken of as opposed to the quickening influence of Christ. We saw, in the 5th chapter to the Romans, that the death counteracted by Christ was the result of Adam's sin. Hence, it will follow, that the spiritual death here referred to

was included in the penalty under consideration. In reference to eternal death, Mr. Watson makes the following remarks: "But the highest sense of the term 'death,' in Scripture, is the punishment of the soul in a future state, both by a loss of happiness and separation from God, and also by a positive infliction of Divine wrath. Now, this is stated not as peculiar to any dispensation of religion, but as common to all;—as the penalty of the transgression of the law of God in every degree. 'Sin is the transgression of the law;' this is its definition. 'The wages of sin is death;' this is its penalty. Here we have no mention made of any particular sin, as rendering the transgressor liable to this penalty, nor of any particular circumstance under which sin may be committed, as calling forth that fatal expression of the Divine displeasure; but of sin itself generally,—of transgression of the Divine law in every form and degree, it is affirmed, 'The wages of sin is DEATH. This is, therefore, to be considered as an axiom in the jurisprudence of Heaven. 'Sin,' says St. James, with like absolute and unqualified manner, 'when it is finished, bringeth forth DEATH;' nor have we the least intimation given in Scripture, that any sin whatever is exempted from this penalty; or that some sins are punished in this life only, and others in the life to come. The degree of punishment will be varied by the offence; but death is the penalty attached to all sin, unless it is averted by pardon, which itself supposes that in the law the penalty has been incurred. What was there then in the case of Adam to take him out of this rule? His act was a transgression of the law, and therefore sin; as sin, its wages was 'death,' which in Scripture, we have seen, means, in its highest sense, future punishment."

According, therefore, to the testimony of Scripture, we conclude that the penalty of the Adamic law was death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

To suppose that this is to be understood in the sense of annihilation, would be contrary to the Scriptures, as well as every testimony in reference to death in any sense of the term. Death never means annihilation. We know not that any created substance ever has been, or ever will be, annihilated. The death of the body is only a separation of the soul from it, resulting in a decomposition of its substance; but not a particle of matter is annihilated. Therefore, to speak of eternal death as the annihilation of soul and body, is a bare assumption, without the least shadow of testimony, either from reason, observation, or Scripture, to sustain it.

II. We would examine, in the second place, *the peculiar relation sustained by Adam to his posterity, in the transaction of the fall.*

The different opinions entertained on this subject may be reduced to three.

1. Pelagians and Socinians maintain that Adam acted for himself alone ; and that his posterity have sustained no injury by his fall, either in their physical or moral constitution ; but that they are born as holy as he was in Paradise, and that the death of the body would have been inevitable, even if Adam had not sinned.

2. Another theory, which has had its advocates, is, that Adam was a kind of natural representative of his posterity ; so that the effects of his fall, to some extent, are visited upon his posterity, not as a penal infliction for guilt attributed to them, but as a natural consequence, in the same sense in which children are compelled to suffer poverty or disgrace, by the profligacy or crimes of their immediate parent, without involving them, in any sense, in the guilt on account of which they suffer. This was the opinion of Dr. Whitby and several divines of the established church of England, who, to say the least, leaned too much toward Pelagianism.

3. A third, and, as we believe, the most rational and scriptural view of the subject is, that Adam, in the transaction of the fall, was the federal head and proper legal representative of his posterity, insomuch that they fell in him as truly, in the view of the law, as he fell himself ; and that the consequences of the first sin are visited upon them, as a penal infliction, for the guilt of Adam imputed to them. That such was the relation of Adam to his posterity, we think can be satisfactorily shown. The federative character of Adam is so clearly implied in the first blessing pronounced upon man, that it would be exceedingly difficult, without its admission, to place upon the passage a consistent interpretation. Gen. i. 28. " And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it : and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Here, observe, the command is, to "replenish the earth," and to "have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Now, if all this cannot be applied to the original pair, but must embrace their posterity, then it will follow, that, as their posterity are not here named, they were included in Adam, their legal head and representative, through whom this blessing was pronounced upon them as really as it was upon Adam himself. In 1 Cor. xv. 45, we read, " The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Here we see Christ and Adam so plainly contrasted, that the very name Adam is given also to Christ. If this is not designed to teach us that Adam, like Christ, was a public character, what can the language import ? The apostle, in

this chapter, was contrasting death and its attendant evils, which came by Adam, with life and its attendant blessings, which came by Christ. In accordance with which, in the 22d verse, we read, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Now, if Christ was a federal representative through whom the blessing of life is communicated, even so was Adam a federal head through whom death is communicated. In the 5th chapter to the Romans, the apostle considers the subject at large, and contrasts the evils entailed upon his posterity by Adam with the benefits they derive from Christ. From the apostle's argument, it is clear that Adam was as much a public representative in the transgression, as Christ was in the righteousness of the atonement. Unless we admit that Adam was the federal head of mankind, how can they be constituted sinners by his offence? Death, being "the wages of sin," could not be inflicted on all mankind unless they had sinned, either personally, or by their representative. But if we deny that Adam was the representative of his posterity in the eye of the law, the law could never treat them as sinners. But we see death passing "upon all," as the apostle says, "for that all have sinned." Here observe the argument is that all upon whom death passes have sinned; but death passes upon many (infants) who have not sinned personally, or "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" then they must have sinned in Adam, and if so, he must have been, in the eye of the law, their federal head. It has already been proved that death is the penalty of the law, or, in other words, "the wages of sin." If so, to suppose that death merely results indirectly upon the posterity of Adam as a natural consequence, and not as a direct penalty, must be an erroneous view of the subject, unsustained by reason or Scripture. Indeed, to deny that Adam in the first transgression was a public representative of his race, would involve us at once in a train of inextricable difficulties. How could we reconcile it with the justice of God, that all mankind should be involved with Adam in the curse, unless they were represented by him in the transgression? Will the justice of God punish the perfectly innocent? Can the penalty of a holy law fall with all its weight upon those who, in no sense of the word, are viewed in the light of transgressors?

We think it must be obvious, from what has been said, that the only scriptural and consistent view of the subject is, to consider Adam in his state of trial as the federal head of all mankind. In him they sinned; in him they fell; and with him they suffer the penalty of a violated law. All difficulty which this arrangement might present, in view of the mercy of God, vanishes as the remedial scheme opens to view.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE VIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what does the importance of a right understanding of this subject appear ?</p> <p>2. What is the Pelagian and Socinian view of the import of the penalty of the Adamic law ?</p> <p>3. What is the second opinion specified ?</p> <p>4. What is the third theory, mentioned as advocated by Dr. Taylor ?</p> <p>5. What is the fourth theory mentioned ?</p> <p>6. What is said to be the scriptural view of the subject ?</p> <p>7. What is the first argument presented ?</p> <p>8. Upon what is the second argument founded ?</p> | <p>9. To what is the appeal made in the third place ?</p> <p>10. What Scriptures are quoted, and how are they shown to prove the point ?</p> <p>11. What different views have been entertained with regard to the relation sustained by Adam to his posterity ?</p> <p>12. What is the correct view of this subject ?</p> <p>13. By what proofs is it sustained ?</p> <p>14. In what difficulty would a denial of this doctrine involve us ?</p> <p>15. In what way may all the seeming difficulties connected with the true doctrine upon this subject be removed ?</p> |
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LECTURE IX.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL.—DEPRAVITY.

IN the preceding lecture we endeavored to prove, first, that the penalty attached to the Adamic law embraced death *temporal, spiritual, and eternal*; and, secondly, that Adam, in the transaction of the fall, was the *federal head* and *public representative* of his posterity. The bearing these points have on the discussion of the *effects* of the fall is so direct and important, that we have deemed it necessary first to invite special attention to them.

The subject which we propose discussing in the present lecture is, *the EFFECTS of the fall upon the moral state of Adam's posterity*; or, in other words, *the doctrine of HUMAN DEPRAVITY*.

We will first endeavor to illustrate what we mean by this doctrine; and then examine the evidence by which it is sustained. Some have denied the native depravity of human nature altogether.

Pelagians, Socinians, and others of kindred sentiments, have represented the human soul, at its first entrance on the stage of life, as being pure and spotless as an angel, or as Adam when first he proceeded from the hand of his Maker.

Others have contended that all men have suffered to some extent, in their moral powers, by Adam's sin; but that there has not resulted a total loss of all good, but merely a greater liability to go astray, requiring a greater degree of watchfulness to retain the degree of good of which we are by nature possessed.

The first theory is a total denial of depravity by nature; the second denies it in part. But that neither opinion is sustained by Scripture or reason, we hope to make appear in the course of this lecture.

The true doctrine upon this subject, which we shall endeavor to sustain by evidence, is this:—that *all mankind are by nature so depraved as to be totally destitute of spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually*. This doctrine is thus expressed in the seventh article of religion, as set forth in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church:—“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is

very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."

It may be inquired whether, according to the above presentation, we may properly understand that man by nature is totally depraved? To this question we would reply in the affirmative. Although some, who have been generally reputed as orthodox, have hesitated to adopt the phrase *total depravity*, yet we think, that, when properly defined, it expresses clearly and forcibly the Scripture doctrine upon this subject; and if so, to object to its use merely because the *term* is not in the Scriptures, though the sense it implies is found there, is perfectly puerile. Those who have opposed the doctrine of total depravity, have generally presented a distorted view of the subject, quite different from that for which its advocates have contended. They have represented total depravity as implying depravity in the greatest possible degree, in every possible sense. Thus they have argued that if all men are totally depraved, none, even by practice, can be worse than others, and none can ever become worse than they already are. Then they have appealed to the evidence of Scripture and facts, to show that some are more wicked and depraved than others; and that the wicked may "wax worse and worse." This they have considered a full refutation of the doctrine of total depravity; and they have boldly raised the shout of victory, as though the whole system they opposed had been completely demolished. Whereas, they have only been playing their engines upon a fabric of their own invention, leaving the doctrine, in the sense for which its advocates contend, undisturbed by their arguments. No sensible advocate for the doctrine of total depravity ever contended that all men are personally wicked in the same degree, or that bad men may not still become worse; nor can such inference be fairly made from a correct representation of the doctrine. Were it contended that all men are by nature depraved to the greatest possible degree, in every possible sense, and that such must be their *personal* character, till changed by converting grace, such a consequence might with more plausibility be deduced.

The task, however, may devolve upon us, to show how the doctrine of total depravity can be understood so as not to involve the above consequences. This we think can easily be done to the satisfaction of the unbiased mind. Depravity may be total in more senses than one.

First; it may be total because *it extends to all the powers and faculties of the soul*; so that every part of the moral constitution is deranged and tainted by iniquity and pollution. Not only the *judgment*, but the *memory*, the *conscience*, the *affections*, and *all the moral powers of our nature*, are depraved and polluted by sin. Now, can it be proved that total

depravity, in this sense, involves the consequences above specified? Surely not. Does it necessarily follow that if all men are by nature thus depraved, none can be personally worse than others, or become worse than they now are? Most certainly it does not.

Secondly; depravity may be total because it implies the *absence or privation of all positive good*. That this is one sense in which depravity is understood to be total by the advocates of the doctrine, we see from the eighth article of religion in the Methodist Discipline:—"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

This implies a total loss, by the fall, of all spiritual good; or, in other words, a complete and total erasure of the Divine image from the soul. But does it follow from this that all men are so bad that they can, in no sense, become worse? Surely not. All may by nature be totally depraved in this sense of the word, and yet some may be worse in their personal character than others, and may still "wax worse and worse" themselves.

Again; depravity may be total because *the entire capacity and powers of the soul, abstract from grace, are filled and continually employed with evil*. That this is one sense in which the doctrine is understood, may be seen by reference to the seventh article of religion, already quoted from the Methodist Discipline:—"Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." Surely it does not follow from this that there can be no degrees in wickedness. May not the capacity and powers of the soul enlarge, and gain strength by the practice of sin; and if so, may they not, in the same proportion, contain and perform a greater degree of moral evil; and yet all the while be filled and employed with evil, "only evil, and that continually?" Thus we perceive that there are various important senses in which depravity may be understood to be total, and yet not be so understood as to exclude the possibility of degrees in wickedness.

The apparent difficulty in reconciling the doctrine of total depravity with the admitted fact that there are degrees in wickedness, results, perhaps, entirely from overlooking the influence of Divine grace upon personal character. According to Scripture, the "true light lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" so that none are left destitute of at least a degree of saving grace, shining upon the benighted and

polluted powers of their souls. This grace is designed to counteract the influence of the fall: and if some are not so deeply depraved as others in their personal character, it is not because they are better by nature, but because they have, to some extent, been brought under the influence of Divine grace, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. If the wicked "wax worse and worse," it is because they more and more resist, and thereby remove themselves from the salutary influence of this enlightening and preventing grace.

Before any valid objection to the doctrine for which we have contended can be founded upon the degrees in the personal character of the wicked, it must be proved that this diversity results neither in whole nor in part from the agency of Divine grace, in connection with the education, moral conduct, and agency of men, in rejecting or yielding to the gracious influence imparted, but that it is to be attributed exclusively to an original and native difference in the moral powers and character, as received by descent from our common progenitor. For this we presume none will contend; hence the objection under review cannot be sustained. The native moral character of man, and that character which individuals may sustain after having passed the line of accountability, and acquired an almost endless diversity in the modification of original character, accordingly as they have yielded to or resisted the influence of Divine grace, are entirely distinct things.

To argue, therefore, against the doctrine of the native total depravity of man, from the degrees in character which men personally acquire, is obviously fallacious.

Again; to suppose, as the opponents of this doctrine are in the habit of contending, that total depravity implies the possession and exercise of every possible evil in the highest possible degree, is self-contradictory and absurd.

This the very nature of the subject, when properly understood, will clearly evince. There are some evil principles so diametrically opposed to each other in their nature, that the one will necessarily work the destruction of the other. Thus, avarice may destroy licentiousness and prodigality; and vice versa. Excessive ambition cannot consist with indolence, &c. Now to suppose that the same individual shall be characterized by every evil in the highest possible degree, at the same time, is to suppose what is impossible in the nature of things, and what the doctrine of total depravity, as above defined, does not require. When we say that all men are by nature totally depraved, we do not mean that they are depraved in the greatest possible degree, and in every possible sense, so that none can become practically worse than they now are. But we mean: 1. That all the powers and faculties of

the soul are depraved. 2. That there is a privation of all spiritual good. 3. That the entire capacity and powers of the soul are filled and continually employed with evil; and that all the good belonging to personal character has been superinduced by grace. This we conceive to be the scriptural and correct view of the subject.

Let the impugnors of this doctrine first inform themselves correctly in reference to its proper import, and then, if Scripture and reason are on their side, let them explode it as a silly fable, o. sickly relic of the dark ages; but if this cannot be fairly accomplished, let not an important and sacred truth “be puffed away by sarcasm,” but let it rest firm upon the basis of Scripture testimony, corroborated as it is, by important and indubitable facts, connected with the character and history of man. Having now endeavored, to some extent at least, to define the native depravity of man, as held by the great body of orthodox Christians, we proceed, in the next place, to the examination of the evidences by which it is sustained. Upon a subject of so great importance, as we might reasonably be led to hope, we will find the evidence abundant and conclusive.

I. Our *first* argument on this subject is founded upon the truth of two positions, already established in the preceding lecture;—first, that the penalty of the Adamic law included death, *temporal*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*; secondly, that, in this transaction, Adam was the *federal head* and *representative* of his posterity. Now, if the above relationship existed between Adam and his posterity, it must necessarily follow that all the penal consequences of the first sin legally fall upon all mankind. In Adam all mankind were represented. Our common nature was seminally in him, and with him identified in the offence. As the acorn contains within its limited compass the substance, germ, or stamina of vegetable life, from which proceeds, without any additional exercise of creative power, in the proper sense, the stately oak, with its numerous branches; even so was Adam our federal head, as it regards our natural existence. In him we were seminally created, and from him have we all proceeded, as naturally as the branch from the oak, or the oak from the acorn. As the very life of the tree is dependent on the disposition made of the acorn, so the very existence of his posterity depended on the preservation of Adam. Had he been annihilated the moment he transgressed, the multiplied millions of his posterity had perished with him. From their state of seminal existence, they would instantly have sunk back into nonentity, and never could have realized a state of conscious being. As we thus see plainly, that, according to the very nature of things, he was the natural head of all our race, it will not appear unreasonable, — nay, it appears almost to follow of necessity,

that he should be constituted our federal head, in view of the law under which he was placed. As such, by his one offence, he "brought death into the world, and all our woe." Whatever the penalty attached to the law may have been, he incurred it as well for his posterity as for himself.

On this point, the inquiry has been instituted, whether the posterity of Adam stand chargeable to the full extent with his personal obliquity, and whether we are to be viewed as having been guilty of actual transgression, in the strongest sense of the word? In reference to this intricate point, it may be difficult to use expressions which may not be understood to convey ideas variant from the true representation of Scripture. We may, however, we think, say with safety, that neither the holy law nor its infinite Author can look upon things differently from their true character. God must look upon sin as sin, and upon righteousness as righteousness, wherever they are found. It would, therefore, follow, that the posterity of Adam, having never personally transgressed, cannot be viewed as personally guilty. The personal act of Adam cannot be imputed to them as their personal act. It never was theirs personally, nor can it by any fiction of law be so considered. As Dr. Watts has remarked, "*Sin is taken either for an act of disobedience to a law, or for the legal result of such an act; that is, the guilt or liahleness to punishment.*" Now, is it not clear, that the guilt and full penalty of Adam's sin may be justly charged upon his posterity, without making his transgression their personal act? A nation or community may be justly chargeable with all the consequences of the act of their acknowledged head and legal representative, as fully as though they had done the same thing personally; even so, if, as we have seen, Adam was the legal head and representative of his posterity, they are justly chargeable with all the consequences of his offence, notwithstanding his sin cannot be viewed or charged upon them as their personal act. It is only theirs through their representative. The guilt and penalty necessarily resulting therefrom are, in the view of the law, justly imputed to and incurred by them. This is the scriptural view of the subject, and necessarily results from the relationship of federal head, which, we have seen, Adam sustained to all mankind. Unless he had sustained this relation to his posterity, his guilt could, in no sense of the word, have been imputed to them, without the most flagrant outrage upon the principles of justice; and unless his guilt had been imputed to them, it is impossible to justify the Divine administration in visiting upon them the dreadful penalty. These three points, then, are so intimately interwoven in the nature of the Divine government, that they necessarily hang together. Admit that Adam was our fed-

eral head, and our guilt and subjection to the penalty of death necessarily follow as legal consequences. Or, if we admit that we are involved in the penalty of death, this will necessarily presuppose our guilt; and if we admit our guilt, this will necessarily presuppose the above-mentioned relationship to Adam, as the only possible way of accounting for it.

But it may perhaps be asked, what connection has all this with the doctrine of the native total depravity of all mankind? To which we are now ready to reply, that the connection is direct; and the doctrine is a necessary and irresistible inference from the principles above presented. If all mankind are involved in the penalty attached to the Adamic law, then it must follow, either that they are totally depraved, or that total depravity was not necessarily connected with that penalty.

That spiritual death, or *the loss of the Divine image from the soul*, (which are but other words for total depravity,) was included in that penalty, has already been shown in the preceding lecture. The argument, then, amounts to demonstration, that all mankind are by nature in a state of moral pollution, properly expressed by the phrase total depravity. As we have seen, death, in the fulness thereof, was the penalty of the law. "The wages of sin is *death*." "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin." Now, if all mankind are not involved in the penalty, we must flatly deny the word of God, which plainly and repeatedly represents death, in every sense of the word, as a penal infliction, — a judicial sentence pronounced upon the guilty, as a just punishment for sin. Not only so, but it will devolve upon us to account for death, as we see it in the world, in some other way. And how, we may ask, is this possible? The Scriptures say, that "*Death* came by *sin*;" and that, too, the "*sin of one man*." As a judicial announcement of the penalty of a violated law, it was declared, "*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*." This sentence most evidently reaches every child of Adam; therefore, all are under the penalty, and as the penalty embraced death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and as total depravity, or a complete alienation of the soul from the "*image of God*," or primitive holiness, is included therein, it necessarily follows, from their relation to Adam as their federal head, and the nature of the penalty in which they are involved, that *all mankind are by nature totally depraved*. (See Watson's Inst., vol. ii., pp. 398, 399.)

II. We proceed, in the next place, to adduce direct declarations of Scripture, for the establishment of the doctrine under consideration. The doctrine of the innate depravity of human nature is found in almost all parts of the Bible.

The first passage we shall here adduce refers to the condition of man anterior to the flood. Gen. vi. 5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here we see the total depravity of the antediluvians expressed in language as forcible as could be framed for the purpose. "The heart of man is here," as Hebden has observed, "put for the soul." This noble principle, formed originally for holy exercises, had become so deeply debased, that "every imagination of the thoughts," that is, the entire intellectual and moral powers, had become totally corrupt; "only evil," — there was no moral good left; "continually," — this was not an occasional or even a frequent lapse into pollution, but it was the constant and uninterrupted state, not of a portion of the human family, but of "man," the general mass of the race of Adam.

Again; turn to Gen. viii. 21, and read, "I will not again curse the ground any more, for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every living thing." Here we may observe two things are forcibly expressed.

1. The total depravity of man in general. The term refers to the entire race; spoken at a time, too, when none but Noah and his family were living upon the earth.

2. This total depravity is represented as characteristic of human nature, not in certain stages or periods of life, but during the entire history; "from his youth;" that is, his infancy, or earliest period of his accountability. Here is not the slightest intimation that this depravity is acquired by education, example, or otherwise; nay, the supposition is impossible. If the principle of evil were not innate, it could not be affirmed to exist "from his youth," for some time at least would be necessary for its acquirement. Nor could this affirmation be made of man, or human nature, as such, especially as the good example and religious precepts of the righteous family then existing, if the character of man is only corrupted by example or education, might certainly be expected to exercise a salutary influence, at least, upon some of their posterity, so as to prevent their falling into this state of moral pollution.

Next, we turn to Job v. 7. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards." Here the plain meaning is, that a state of trouble is just as natural and certain to man as for "the sparks to fly upwards." Now, unless it can be shown that perfectly innocent beings are subjected to "trouble," pain, and death, which the Scriptures declare to be the consequences only of sin, it will necessarily follow that man is born in sin and guilt. In Job xv. 14, we read: "What is man that he should be *clean*? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be *righteous*?"

The reading of the Septuagint here is: "Who shall be clean from filth? Not one; even though his life on earth be a single day."

Again; Ps. li. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here, upon the supposition that man is born in a state of moral rectitude, the plain declarations of Scripture are subject to no rational interpretation, but must be shamefully evaded or boldly denied.

Ps. lviii. 3, 4. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Here, "estranged," and "speaking lies," certainly strongly express a state of depravity. "Estranged," alienated from the "Divine image;" "speaking lies," going forward in actual sin; "from the womb, as soon as they are born," not an acquired, but a native depravity. What other sense can the words bear?

Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Here total depravity is expressed in strong language. Observe, the prophet does not say, the hearts of the most abandoned characters; but "the heart of man," the race in general, in their native state. He does not speak of it as partially, but totally depraved, "desperately wicked."

Quotations from the Old Testament might be multiplied; but we deem it useless, and shall now pass to the New Testament.

Perhaps one of the most forcible passages upon this subject is found in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, 10—18th verses. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

The apostle here quotes from the 14th and 53d Psalms. A more glowing picture of total depravity, it is, perhaps, impossible for language to paint. It applies to the entire race; "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men;" (the world at large;) and here is portrayed the Divine decision upon their moral character. That this description refers to the native character of all men, is evident from the fact that the language here used could not apply to the *actual* moral character of all men, in any age; for there have always been some,

who, in this sense, have been pronounced righteous, in the judgment of God himself.

That the application and force of the apostle's argument in this chapter may be more clearly seen, we would quote the 19th and 23d verses. "Now, we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world may become guilty before God.*" "For *all have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God." The apostle is here illustrating the doctrine of justification. His object is to show, 1. That all the world, both Jews and Gentiles, are in the same deplorable state of "sin" and "guilt;" 2. That there is but one plan by which any can be justified, that is, by the mercy of God through faith in Christ Jesus. His whole argument is founded upon the universal depravity of man; and this must be understood to apply to the state of all the human family, not at any particular period, but during their entire history up to the time in which justification takes place by faith in Christ. If we deny this, his argument immediately becomes inappropriate and powerless. If men are by nature in a justified state, then how could the apostle argue, from their unholy and sinful nature, that all need justification, and that they can obtain it by faith alone? Let it be observed, that the expressions of the apostle, in this chapter, in reference to the state of man, are so general and so full in their extent and import, that two important points are established beyond dispute;—1. That he is describing the condition of the whole human family, in every stage of their existence, previous to their acceptance of salvation by the gospel. His expressions are, "both Jews and Gentiles," "all," and "all the world." 2. The condition in which he represents them is not one of innocence or righteousness, but of sin and pollution; his language is, "they are all *under sin*; all *have sinned*, and *come short of the glory of God*;" and that "all the world may become *guilty* before God." Now, we may confidently demand, what portion of the human family are not here included? And if they are not in a state of moral pollution, what meaning can be placed upon the apostle's words? The testimony here is so pointed, that if the native depravity of man be not here taught, then will we be compelled to affirm, that "sin" is no more "sin," and "guilt" is no more "guilt."

Our next proof is founded upon those passages which base the necessity of the new birth upon the native depravity of man.

Here the discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus is conclusive. John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 5th, 6th, and 7th verses. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is

born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Here the necessity of the new birth is predicated upon the nature with which we are born naturally. How, then, can this be, if we are born holy ? Surely, if such were the case, so far from arguing therefrom the necessity of being born again, the rational inference would be, that as we had already been born in a state of holiness, there is no necessity for the new birth. That our Saviour, when he says, " That which is born of the flesh is flesh," by the term flesh, in the latter instance, refers to our native sinfulness and pollution, is clear from the fact that no other construction can be placed upon his words, without making him speak nonsense. If we say that the word flesh is to be taken for the body literally, in both places, then the sentence only contains a simple truism, too puerile to be uttered by the lips of the blessed Jesus ; and it would have been quite as instructive, had he said, that which is true is true. Besides, how then could he have drawn, from the fact that he announced, any argument for the necessity of the new birth ? That the term flesh is frequently used in the Scriptures to denote the principle of corruption, or native depravity in man, will appear from the following passages : — Rom. vii. 18. " In my *flesh* dwelleth no good thing." Rom. viii. 13. " If ye live after the *flesh* ye shall die." Gal. v. 17. " For the *flesh* lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the *flesh*." In the 8th chapter to the Romans, the apostle uses the term as a principle of unholiness opposed to the Spirit, and enlarges upon the subject so clearly, as to furnish an admirable comment on our Lord's words to Nicodemus. 5th to the 8th verse. " For they that are after the *flesh* do mind the things of the *flesh* ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be *carnally* minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the *carnal* mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God." In 1 Cor. ii. 14, a parallel passage reads, " The natural man," &c. Now let the quotations from the apostle be taken in connection with what our Saviour said to Nicodemus, and the argument is full and conclusive, that every man who is literally born of the flesh inherits from his birth a carnal, unholy, or depraved nature, so directly opposed to the Spirit, and everything good, that, in that nature, or while he walks after it, he cannot please God, and therefore he must be born again. How different this from the teachings of those who speak of the native purity of man, and represent a sinful disposition as the result of example or education ! The Bible doctrine most evidently is, that we are born with an unholy or sinful nature ; — that the principle of evil is as really and

deeply engrafted in our natural constitution as that of poison in the egg of the serpent. As certainly as the young viper will be naturally poisonous and disposed to bite, so soon as its native powers are developed; so will man, as he advances to maturity, be possessed of an evil nature of enmity to God, which will ever lead him in the way of sin, until the "old man be crucified," and he be "born again." If the tree be evil, the fruit will also be evil; if the fountain be impure, it will send forth a corrupt stream. The root of sin is inherent in the very nature of man. "Out of the heart of man," or from this native principle of unholiness, proceed all manner of wickedness and abominations. Such is the doctrine of the Scriptures.

III. We proceed in the next place to notice, that *this doctrine is confirmed by experience and observation.*

Aside from the clear testimony of Scripture to the doctrine of the native depravity of man, it receives abundant corroborative proof from our individual experience, and from the history of the world. The principal evidence of this kind may be embraced in five important facts, which are thus stated by Mr. Watson :

"1. The, at least, general corruption of manners in all times and countries. 2. The strength of the tendency in man to evil. 3. The early appearance of the principles of various vices in children. 4. Every man's consciousness of a natural tendency in his mind to one or more evils. 5. That general resistance to virtue in the heart, which renders education, influence, watchfulness, and conflict necessary to counteract the force of evil."

The above facts are so evident, that we scarce suppose it possible for any one of common intelligence and candor to deny them. To account for them on any reasonable principles, upon the supposition that man is not by nature depraved, is, in our opinion, utterly impossible.

Socinians, Pelagians, and Unitarians, have generally admitted their truth, and their utmost ingenuity has been exerted to show that they can be reconciled with their system.

A brief notice of their efforts on this subject may suffice.

1. To account for the general prevalence of wickedness, reliance has been placed on the influence of example and education. Here, a little attention, we think, will show that the difficulty is not solved, but only shifted to another quarter. If man be not naturally depraved, it will be just as difficult to account for bad example as for wickedness itself. Yea, more; bad example is but another name for wickedness. Therefore, to say that general wickedness is the result of general bad example, is the same as to say that general wickedness is the result of general wickedness; or, in other words, the cause of itself, which is a manifest

absurdity. Further, we might ask, how was it, upon this principle, that the first examples of the various species of moral wickedness originated? Whose example taught Cain to hate and murder his brother? Whose example taught the first idolater to worship an idol? And so we might pass over the entire catalogue of vices, and show that, according to this system, they never could have originated. That we are naturally imitative beings, to a great extent, we readily admit; but if this alone leads to a course of wickedness, it would follow, upon the same principle, that there should be quite as much potency in good as in bad example. But, we ask, is this the case? Why did not the piety of righteous Noah lead all his sons and their descendants, from generation to generation, in the pathway of duty and obedience? Again, is it not frequently the case, that the children of pious parents fall into habits of immorality? If example alone shapes their character, surely, the pious example of their parents, which they see almost constantly before their eyes, should be more powerful than the wicked example of others, more remote from them, and perhaps but seldom witnessed. Allow to example all the influence it can possibly wield, still it would follow, that if man is naturally innocent and pure, there should be more virtue than vice in the world; but if, as some contend, the soul is naturally indifferent,—a perfect blank, tending neither to good nor evil,—then we might expect to find virtue and vice pretty equally balanced. But the fact of the world's history is contradictory to all this.

2. But now look at the second fact,—the strength of the tendency in man to evil. Who has not felt it in his own heart? “When we would do good, evil is present with us.” The turbulence of evil passions is such, that the wise man has said, “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” The strength of this native tendency in man to evil is so great, that to counteract it, an effort is required; the cross must be taken up, right hands cut off, right eyes plucked out, and a violent warfare upon the impulses of our own nature must be waged. Now, contemplate the absurdity of supposing that bad example could originate this tendency to evil. If such were the case, good example would produce a similar tendency to good; but such is evidently not the fact. The native tendency of the human heart is invariably to sin; so much so, that in no case can it be counteracted but by the “crucifixion” of “the old man.”

3. The third fact is, the early appearance of the principles of various vices in children. Although entirely separated from their species, native instinct will lead the young lion or tiger to be fierce and voracious; and with equal certainty, pride, envy, malice, revenge, selfishness, anger and other evil passions, have been found invariably to spring up at a very

early stage in the hearts of children, whatever may have been the example or education with which they have been furnished. Nay, they have more or less frequently exhibited themselves before the opportunity could have been afforded for the influence of example. Now, how can this be accounted for but upon the supposition that the seeds of these vices are sown in our nature?

4. The fourth fact is, that every man is conscious of a natural tendency to many evils. All men are not prone alike to every species of vice. Some have a strong constitutional tendency to pride, others to anger, others to cowardice, others to meanness, and others perhaps to avarice, or sensuality. Now, if we deny the native depravity of man, we necessarily deny this constitutional tendency to one vice more than another; for if man has no native tendency to evil in general, it is clear he can have no native tendency to any particular species of evil. Every whole includes all its parts.

5. The fifth fact is, that general resistance to virtue in the heart, which renders education, influence, watchfulness, and conflict necessary to counteract the force of evil. Vice in the human soul, like noxious weeds in a luxuriant soil, is a spontaneous growth. It only requires to be left alone, and it will flourish. Not so with virtue. Its seeds must be sown, and, like the valuable grains produced by the assiduous care and toil of the husbandman, it requires an early and persevering culture. Hence, the necessity of a careful moral training;—the value of a good education. What powerful influences are requisite to be wielded in the promotion of virtue! Motives of gratitude, interest, honor, benevolence, and every consideration that ought to weigh with an intelligent mind, are presented as incentives to virtue. The closest vigilance is necessary, at every point, to keep the object of good from being entirely forgotten or neglected; and withal, a perpetual conflict must be kept up with surrounding evil, or the thorns and thistles of vice and folly will choke the growth of the good seed, and lay waste the blooming prospect. Why, we ask, is this the case? Deny the doctrine of the native depravity of man, and it is utterly unaccountable. If example were the only influence, and man had no greater tendency to evil than to good, might we not as well expect to find virtue the spontaneous and luxuriant growth, and vice the tender plant, requiring all this toil and care for its preservation and prosperity?

Those who have endeavored to account for these facts on the principle of education, find in their undertaking no less difficulty than those who attribute them to the influence of example. Education, in too many instances, it must be confessed, has been greatly defective; but never so bad as to account for all the evil passions and sinful prac-

tices of men. So far from this being the case, its general tendency, defective as it may be, is of an opposite character. Men are generally wicked, not so much for the want of good precept, as in spite of it. Instruction has generally been better than example; so that, if bad example cannot account for the proneness to evil in men, much less can education. Who taught the first murderer his lessons in the crime of shedding his brother's blood? Which of the prevalent vices of mankind had its origin in imparted instruction? What crime is it that can only exist and prevail where special schools are established for its culture? The influence of education, it must be admitted, is very great; but the difficulty to be accounted for is this:—Why is it that man is so ready in the school of vice, and so dull in the school of virtue? Deny the doctrine of our native corruption, and why might we not, with far more reason, expect that education should produce general virtue than general vice? Thus have we seen that experience and observation only confirm the Scripture doctrine of the native and total depravity of man.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE IX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the Pelagian and Socinian notion of depravity?</p> <p>2. What other erroneous sentiment has obtained on the subject?</p> <p>3. What is the true doctrine upon this subject?</p> <p>4. Is man by nature <i>totally</i> depraved?</p> <p>5. What distorted view of this doctrine have its opponents generally presented?</p> <p>6. Does <i>total</i> depravity imply depravity in every possible sense, and to the greatest possible extent?</p> <p>7. In what respects may depravity be understood to be <i>total</i>?</p> <p>8. Wherein appears the absurdity of representing <i>total</i> depravity as implying depravity in every possible sense and degree?</p> <p>9. What two positions, already established, form the basis of the first argument?</p> <p>10. How does it appear, that Adam was the natural head and representative of his posterity?</p> <p>11. Do his posterity stand chargeable with the personal obliquity of his offence?</p> <p>12. In what two senses is sin taken, according to Dr. Watts?</p> | <p>13. How does it appear that our relation to Adam, our guilt, and our subjection to the penalty of the law, are inseparably connected?</p> <p>14. In what way do these facts prove our native and total depravity?</p> <p>15. What passages are brought from the Old Testament to prove this doctrine?</p> <p>16. From the New Testament?</p> <p>17. Do experience and observation confirm this doctrine?</p> <p>18. What five obvious facts are here appealed to?</p> <p>19. How have Pelagians and Socinians endeavored to account for these facts?</p> <p>20. How does it appear that they only shift, without solving, the difficulty?</p> <p>21. If men were naturally holy, what kind of example might we reasonably expect to be most prevalent? If the moral character of man were naturally indifferent to good and evil, what might we expect to be the state of actual character?</p> <p>22. How does it appear that education cannot account for these facts? Admitting the influence of education to be ever so great, what would be the great difficulty still remaining?</p> |
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LECTURE X.

DEPRAVITY—OBJECTIONS, STATE OF INFANTS.

HAVING contemplated the evidences by which the doctrine of the innate depravity of man is sustained, we propose, in the present lecture, *an examination of several* DIFFICULTIES, with which the opposers of this doctrine have considered it encumbered.

I. It has been urged by the advocates of original innocence, that *this doctrine of total depravity makes God directly the author of sin, by alleging that he has judicially infused into the nature of man a positive evil, taint, or infection, which descends from Adam to all his posterity.*

To this we reply, that, although some advocates of the doctrine have so expressed themselves as to give seeming ground for this objection, yet a close attention to the proper definition of depravity will entirely free the doctrine from any difficulty from this quarter. The doctrine of the native depravity of man, as taught in the Scriptures, does not imply a direct infusion of positive evil from the Almighty. The positive evil here implied is rather the necessary consequence of a privation of moral good; as it has been aptly expressed by some, it is “a *depravation* resulting from a *deprivation*.”

This view of the subject is sustained by the following remarks from Arminius: “But since the tenor of the covenant into which God entered with our first parents was this, that if they continued in the favor and grace of God, by the observance of that precept and others, the gifts which had been conferred upon them should be transmitted to their posterity by the like Divine grace which they had received; but if they should render themselves unworthy of those favors, through disobedience, that their posterity should likewise be deprived of them, and should be liable to the contrary evils: hence it followed that all men who were to be naturally propagated from them, have become obnoxious to death temporal and eternal, and have been destitute of that gift of the Holy Spirit, or of original righteousness. This punishment is usually called a privation of the image of God, and original sin. But we allow this point to be made the subject of discussion;—beside the want or absence of original righteousness, may not some other contrary quality be constituted as another part of original sin? We think it is more probable that

this absence alone of original righteousness is original sin itself, since it alone is sufficient for the commission and production of every actual sin whatever."

The scriptural view of the subject is, that Adam by sin forfeited the gift of the Holy Spirit for himself and his posterity, and this privation, as a necessary consequence, resulted in the loss of holiness, happiness, and every spiritual good, together with real involvement in all the evil implied in spiritual death. As death, with putrefaction and corruption, flows directly from the privation of natural life, so moral evil or depravity immediately and necessarily results from the absence of spiritual life. So we perceive there was no necessity for the direct infusion of moral evil by the Almighty. It was only requisite for the Holy Spirit to be withdrawn, and moral evil, like a mighty torrent when the flood-gate is lifted, deluged and overwhelmed the soul.

The following, upon the subject of the "retraction of God's spirit from Adam," is from Mr. Howe. "This we do not say gratuitously; for do but consider that plain text, Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' If the remission of the curse carry with it the conferring of the grace of the Spirit, then the curse, while it did continue, could not but include and carry in it the privation of the Spirit. This was part of the curse upon apostate Adam, the loss of God's Spirit. As soon as the law was broken, man was cursed, so as that thereby this Spirit should be withheld, should be kept off otherwise than as upon the Redeemer's account, and according to his methods, it should be restored. Hereupon it could not but ensue that the holy image of God must be erased and vanished."

We conclude upon this point with the following quotation from Mr. Watson's Institutes. Speaking of Adam, he says, "He did sin, and the Spirit retired; and the tide of sin once turned in, the mound of resistance being removed, it overflowed his whole nature. In this state of alienation from God, men are born with all these tendencies to evil, because the only controlling and sanctifying power, the presence of the Spirit, is wanting, and is now given to man, not as when first brought into being as a *creature*, but is secured to him by the mercy and grace of a new and different dispensation, under which the Spirit is administered in different degrees, times, and modes, according to the wisdom of God, never on the ground of our being creatures, but as redeemed from the curse of the law by him who became a curse for us."

II. In the next place, it is objected to this doctrine, that, "As we have

souls immediately from God, if we are born sinful, he must either create sinful souls, which cannot be supposed without impiety, or send sinless souls into sinful bodies, to be defiled by the unhappy union, which is as inconsistent with his goodness as his justice. Add to this, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than to suppose that a body, a mere lump of organized matter, is able to communicate to a pure spirit that moral pollution of which itself is as incapable as the murderer's sword is incapable of cruelty."

To this objection we reply, that, however weighty it may have been considered by many, it rests entirely upon a vulgar assumption, which cannot be sustained; viz., that we have our souls immediately from God by infusion;—that such is not the fact, but that they descend from Adam by traduction, we are led to believe from the following considerations:

1. It is said that God "rested on the seventh day from all his work" of creation; consequently it is unreasonable to suppose that he is still engaged in the *creation of souls*, as the *bodies* of mankind multiply upon earth.

2. Eve was originally created in Adam. God made Adam of the "dust of the ground," and infused into his body a living soul; but when Eve was afterward produced, she was not properly created; she was made of a part of Adam's body, and there is no account of God's breathing into her the breath of life, as in the case of Adam. She was called *woman* because she was taken out of man. Now if Eve derived her nature, soul and body, from Adam, why may not the souls of his posterity descend from him?

3. If we do not derive our souls by natural descent, neither can we thus derive the life of our bodies, for "the *body* without the *spirit* is *dead*."

4. We read in Gen. v. 3, that fallen "Adam begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image*." Adam was a fallen, *embodied spirit*;—such also must have been his son, or he could not have been "in his own likeness."

5. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the *flesh* is *flesh*." We have in another place shown, that by the term *flesh* here in the latter instance, we are to understand our fallen, sinful nature. If so, it must include the soul. Again; it is written, "Ye must be *born again*." Now if the soul is not born with the body, how can its renovation in conversion be called being "*born again*?"

Some have thought that the doctrine of the traduction of human souls tends to materialism. "But this arises," says Mr. Watson, "from a mistaken view of that in which the procreation of a human being lies,

which does not consist in the production out of nothing of either of the parts of which the compounded being, man, is constituted, but in the uniting them substantially with one another." Since, therefore, the *traduction* of the human soul is more rational and scriptural than its *immediate creation*, the objection to the doctrine of the native pollution of the soul, which we have been considering, is shown to be groundless.

We need not be told that the view here taken of this subject involves mysteries. This we admit. But is it therefore erroneous? Who can understand the mysteries of the new birth? and yet we receive the doctrine as true. Why, then, should we reject the doctrine of the natural descent of the soul, merely because we cannot comprehend how it is that all the souls as well as the bodies of his posterity were created in Adam, from whom they are derived by descent?

III. In the third place, the doctrine of the native total depravity of man has been objected to from the fact, that *there is frequently to be found much moral good in unregenerate men.*

In reply to this, we would observe, that all the good claimed with justice as belonging to unregenerate men, can be satisfactorily accounted for, without denying that all men are by nature totally depraved.

1. There may be much seeming good, much negative virtue, in society, originating from the fact that many of the various vices of mankind, from their very nature, to some extent counteract each other. Thus the passion of avarice may lead to the practice of industry. The love of fame may lead to acts of ostentatious benevolence, &c.; but in such cases, the principle of action is not spiritually good.

2. Selfish motives may frequently lead to acts of seeming virtue; a mere love of self-interest induces many to endeavor to secure for themselves a good character, on account of the standing and influence which it will give them in society; all this may be perfectly consistent with the view we have presented of the native corruption of the soul.

3. In the next place, the character of man may appear much better than it really is, merely because surrounding circumstances have not called into open action the latent principles of the soul. The seed of evil may be there, but it may not come forth and exhibit itself, merely because those exciting causes calculated to call it forth to action have not been brought to bear.

4. But, lastly, that acts really praiseworthy, and founded upon principle not wholly corrupt, have frequently been performed by the unregenerate, we are compelled to admit. But all this can be satisfactorily and fully explained, without impugning the doctrine of total depravity. We are not left entirely to ourselves, and to the unbridled influence of our corrupt nature. Through the atonement of Christ, a day of grace is

given to men, the Holy Spirit is sent to visit the hearts of sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins," and the "true light lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" so that all that is spiritually and really good in principle among men, is to be attributed, not to nature, but to grace. It comes not through the *first*, but the *second* Adam.

IV. In the last place, it has been objected *that the doctrine of innate depravity is inconsistent with the principles of a righteous administration, in the case of* INFANTS.

The objection now presented has, perhaps, been more earnestly and repeatedly urged, and more confidently relied upon, by the advocates of the native innocence and purity of man, than any other. And as a proper understanding of the character and condition of infants is so vitally essential to a correct view of the entire doctrine of human depravity, we shall devote the remainder of this lecture to the investigation of that interesting topic. The following are the principal theories which have been advocated upon this subject.

1. That infants are born perfectly innocent and holy.
2. That they are born without any moral character whatever, and alike indifferent to good and evil.
3. That they are born with a strong bias to evil, though not totally corrupt.
4. That they are born in a state of sinfulness and guilt, amounting to total depravity; and that, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ, some of them, dying in infancy, may perish everlastingly.
5. That they are born in a state of unholiness, but, through the atonement of Christ, in a state of justification or innocence, and that, if they die in infancy, they will be infallibly saved.
6. That they are born in a state of pollution and guilt, but that, through the atonement of Christ, all who die in infancy will infallibly be saved.

It will be readily perceived, that while the difference between some of these theories is very slight, between others it is vastly important. In this place we would remark, that what we conceive to be the true Scripture doctrine is contained in the last mentioned theory. The first, viz., that infants are born perfectly innocent and holy, is the doctrine of Pelagians, Socinians, and Unitarians generally; and has already been sufficiently refuted.

The second, viz., that they are born without any moral character whatever, and alike indifferent to good and evil, and the third, viz., that they are born with a strong bias to evil, though not totally corrupt, have both had their advocates among semi-Pelagians, Socinians, Unitarians,

and some of the new school Presbyterians of the United States, and have already been sufficiently refuted.

The fourth, viz., that they are born in a state of sinfulness and guilt, amounting to total depravity, and that, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ, some of them, dying in infancy, may perish everlastingly, has been advocated by none but Predestinarians. The latter branch of this theory, which avows the possibility of infants perishing everlastingly, is the only portion of it inconsistent with what we conceive to be the Scripture doctrine; and it shall presently be considered.

The fifth, viz., that they are born in a state of unholiness, but, through the atonement of Christ, in a state of justification or innocence, and that if they die in infancy, they will infallibly be saved, has been advocated by some Arminian divines. That part of this theory which avows the native innocence or justification of infants is the only portion of it which we conceive to be erroneous, and it will be presently considered.

The sixth, viz., that they are born in a state of pollution and guilt, but that, through the atonement of Christ, all who die in infancy will infallibly be saved, has been advocated by the leading divines of the Arminian school, and contains what we believe to be the Scripture doctrine; and so far as it differs from the fourth and fifth theories, we shall proceed to its investigation.

Observe here, that so far as this theory differs from the first, second, and third theories, it has already been considered, in the investigation of the doctrine of innate total depravity; therefore, its discrepancy with the fourth and fifth theories is all that is now before us. It differs from the fourth theory in that it avows the *infallible salvation of all who die in infancy*. It differs from the fifth theory in that it avows the *native guilt of infants*, in opposition to their *native innocence or justification*. We will attend to these two points in order.

1. We shall endeavor to show that all who die in infancy *will infallibly be saved*.

The possibility of the eternal destruction of any who die in infancy is so directly at war with what we conceive to be the character of the Divine attributes, and so shocking to the human feelings, that it is really astonishing that the sentiment should ever have received the least countenance. Few, indeed, even of those whose general system of theology required it, have had the hardihood openly to avow it; yet it has had some bold and confident defenders. In the "Westminster Confession of Faith," the standard of the Presbyterians of the United States, we find the following declaration: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth." Here, although the

possibility of infants perishing is not fully expressed, yet it appears to us to be clearly implied. To speak of "elect infants," necessarily implies that there are reprobate infants; for if all infants were "elect," the term *elect* in the passage would be superfluous and unmeaning. But the sentiments avowed in other parts of the same book clearly teach that there are reprobate infants. Election and reprobation, according to the whole Calvinistic scheme, are eternal and unconditional; consequently, all who ever sustain the character of elect or reprobate must do so even in infancy. Again; as the salvation of "elect infants" is here specified, the idea is clearly implied that none others are saved.

That such is the view taken by at least some of the leading authors of the Calvinistic school, we see from the following language of Dr. George Hill, in his Lectures, (book iv., ch. 1.) "In what manner the mercy of God will dispose hereafter of those infants who die in consequence of Adam's sin, without having done any evil, the Scriptures have not declared; and it does not become us to say more than is said in the excellent words of our Confession of Faith." He then repeats the words from the Confession as above quoted. Here observe, that although the author appears to shrink from a direct avowal of his sentiments, yet we can be at no loss to determine them from his own language. He was a Presbyterian, and here quotes with approbation the standard of his own church, which we have seen implies the possibility, yea, the certainty, of some infants being not saved. Yet it must be confessed that the author, in the short quotation made from him, indirectly contradicts himself. He first affirms, that "In what manner the mercy of God will dispose of those infants who die in consequence of Adam's sin, without having done any evil, THE SCRIPTURES HAVE NOT DECLARED." He then quotes, with commendation, the language of the Confession of Faith, which, as we have seen, does expressly declare what disposition shall be made of one portion, and clearly implies what disposition shall be made of the other portion. Thus it is clear, that the horrible doctrine of the eternal damnation of infants has had manifest favor with at least some of the most eminent Predestinarians, although they have generally faltered, felt themselves trammelled, and fallen into inconsistency and self-contradiction, when they have spoken upon the subject.

In the outset, we confess that the Scriptures nowhere declare, in *express and direct terms*, that all who die in infancy shall infallibly be saved. But this cannot be urged as a proof that the doctrine is not there plainly taught. The Scriptures nowhere declare, in *express and direct terms*, that there is a God; but who will venture to affirm that the existence of God is not therein plainly taught? Indirect and inferential testimony is frequently as powerful and convincing as a direct

asseveration possibly can be. Indeed, there are some truths, both in science and religion, so obviously implied, and so deeply interwoven in the whole system with which they stand connected, that a direct affirmation of them would be a work of supererogation. Such is evidently the being of God above referred to. But so far from the Scripture evidence upon that subject being impaired by the absence of a direct affirmation, it derives additional strength and majesty from that very circumstance. The same observation will be correct, in reference to the eternal salvation of all who die in infancy. This is so clearly implied in the very nature of the Divine attributes and administration, and in the whole tenor of Scripture, that the inspired penmen have not stopped to affirm it in direct terms. But that the Scriptures do teach this doctrine, in an indirect, though clear and forcible, manner, we may readily see.

(1.) St. Peter declares that “God is no respecter of persons.” This may be taken as a brief illustration and comment upon the Divine character and government, as we see them exhibited in the Scriptures. And were there no other text upon the subject, this is sufficient to prove the doctrine in question, our opponents themselves being judges. Now, observe, it is admitted on all hands that some who die in infancy are saved; then it will follow, that if a moral difference in the character of infants is not such as to justify so great a disparity in the Divine procedure with them as to send the one to happiness and the other to perdition, *all* must inevitably be saved, or God is a “respecter of persons,” contrary to the text. That the moral character of infants is the same, is an undeniable fact. Therefore, we must admit the salvation of all who die in infancy, or flatly deny the above Scripture.

(2.) Take the doctrine and arguments of St. Paul, in the 5th chapter to the Romans, where he contrasts the consequences of Adam’s sin with the benefits of the atonement of Christ, and you will find it impossible to understand his language, unless you admit the truth of the doctrine for which we now contend. The apostle there shows that the benefits of Christ were coëxtensive with, yea, even surpassed, the miseries of the fall. How could this be, if some who are injured by the fall are never benefited by Christ? And in what way can the infant, who dies and sinks to eternal destruction, be benefited by Christ? In the 18th verse of that chapter we read: “Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon *all men to condemnation*; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life*.” Here, if “all men,” in the first instance, includes the whole human family, so it must in the last instance. The terms are the same, and evidently used in the same sense. If this verse means anything at all, it means

that all who fell in Adam are provisionally restored in Christ. That all are actually and immediately justified, cannot be the meaning. Adults are not justified till they repent and believe; but the provision is made for the actual justification of all, according to certain terms, unless they themselves reject it, by a voluntary refusal to comply with the condition. Infants cannot reject the provision; therefore, if they die in infancy, their actual justification and salvation must infallibly be completed. But, I ask, how can the infant, upon the supposition that it dies and sinks to ruin, be properly said to have been benefited by the remedial scheme? How can it be said, that the "free gift" came upon such, (viz) "unto," or, in order to, justification of life? Surely, we have in this passage indubitable, though indirect, proof of the eternal salvation of all who die in infancy. Many other proofs of a kindred character might be adduced, but we deem them unnecessary. It will follow, from what has been above presented, that the doctrine of innate total depravity involves no difficulty in the Divine administration in reference to infants, so far as their eternal destiny is concerned. Let the fall be viewed in connection with the atonement. The merciful provision coëxisted with the miseries of the curse; and as the hand of justice fell upon man to crush him, the hand of mercy was outstretched to redeem and save.

2. We would now enter upon the investigation of that portion of the theory we have adopted which avows the native guilt of infants, in opposition to their native justification or innocence.

It has already been observed, that some Arminian divines, who acknowledge the native moral pollution or unholiness of infants, contend, nevertheless, that, through the atonement of Christ, they are born in a state of justification or perfect innocence; and, consequently, that they are in no sense of the word, guilty. The theory which we have presented not only contends that they are born unholy, but also that they are born guilty. Perhaps the difference of sentiment here may consist more in the definition of the term guilt than in the subject itself; but so intimate is the connection of this subject with the important doctrine of human depravity, and so powerful its bearing upon the great subject of the atonement, and the entire scheme of redemption, that great pains should be taken to be perfectly correct, even in the use of terms. A slight error here may almost imperceptibly lead to the pernicious principles of Pelagianism.

The simple question which we would now discuss is this:—Are infants, in any sense of the word, guilty? We adopt the affirmative. But first, we inquire for the definition of the terms guilt and justification, as these terms, in the subject before us, stand opposed to each other. According to Webster, and other lexicographers, one definition of GUILT

is, “exposure to forfeiture or other penalty :” and one definition of justification is, “remission of sin and absolution from guilt and punishment.” These definitions, we think, have not only been sanctioned by orthodox divines in general, but are in accordance with the Scripture representation of the subject. With the understanding of the terms here presented, if it can be shown that infants are exposed to any kind of forfeiture, or any other penalty of any kind whatever, it will appear that they are guilty. As justification, in theology, is properly taken for the opposite of guilt, it will follow that if infants are justified in the full sense of the word, they cannot be guilty in any sense of the word ; but, on the other hand, if there is any sense of the word in which they are not justified, in the same sense they must be guilty. Now, that they are not personally or actually guilty, or guilty in any sense of the word so as to be personally accountable to God in judgment, or in danger of future and eternal punishment, we freely admit. Therefore, the only question now in dispute is simply this : — Are infants guilty, according to the Scriptures, in the view of the law and government of God, as a consequence of original sin visited upon them from Adam ? This is the only, and the plain point at issue. In the light of Scripture and reason, we proceed to examine the question.

In Ps. li. 5, we read : “ Behold, I was shapen in *iniquity* ; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” On this verse, Dr. Clarke says : “ I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin*.” The advocates for the native innocence of infants are reduced to the necessity of flatly contradicting this text, or, what is little better, the strange absurdity of asserting that both sin and iniquity may exist without guilt, and be reconciled with perfect innocence. Further still, they must either reject Dr. Clarke’s comment, or admit that guilt is implied in original sin. In Isa. liii. 6, we read : “ The Lord hath laid on him the *iniquity* of us *all*.” On this verse, Dr. Clarke says : “ The Lord hath caused to meet in him the punishment due to the iniquities of all.” Here, if we say that infants are not included, we are reduced to the absurdity of saying, that ALL only means A PART : but, what is far worse, we are driven into Pelagianism ; for if the punishment due to the original sin attached to infants was not laid upon Christ, he never died for them, and, sure enough, they may safely be left without a Redeemer. But, if it be said that infants are included in this passage, then are they guilty ; for their “ *iniquity* was laid upon Christ.” But if we still deny their guilt, we are reduced to the absurdity of saying, that here is iniquity, and that, too, requiring punishment, and yet, how passing strange ! this iniquity is free from guilt, and consistent with perfect innocence.

The state of the case then, if we deny the guilt of infants, would be this:—infants are involved in sin and iniquity so heinous that its punishment was laid upon Christ, and yet so inoffensive as not to imply guilt in any sense, but perfect innocence! It is clear, that, if Christ suffered for infants at all, it was either for their guilt or their innocence. There can be no medium; wherever there is no guilt, there is perfect innocence. Then, if we deny the guilt of infants, if Christ suffered for them at all, it was for their perfect innocence; and if so, his sufferings, in their case, were useless; for a perfectly innocent being never could have suffered eternal torment, even if there had been no atonement. Yea, we may say more; a perfectly innocent being can never be punished at all.

In Rom. iii. 19 and 23, we read, “That every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* may become *guilty* before God;” and “*All* have *sinned*, and come short of the glory of God.” On these passages, Dr. Clarke uses these words:—“Both Jews and Gentiles stand convicted before God, for all mankind have sinned against this law.” He afterwards adds, “and consequently are equally helpless and guilty.” Here, unless we say that “all the world,” and “all mankind,” only mean a part, we are compelled to admit the guilt of infants; otherwise, we contradict both the commentator and the apostle, for they both expressly use the word guilty.

It is, indeed, a matter of astonishment, that any one can read the fifth chapter to the Romans, and not be convinced that all mankind, of every age, are held as sinful and guilty, in consequence of the disobedience of Adam. On the 14th verse, Dr. Clarke uses these words, “In or through Adam, *guilt* came upon all men.” Here, again, we have our choice, to acknowledge the guilt of infants, or contradict both the text and commentator. In the 18th verse of this chapter, “all men” are said to be brought under “condemnation” for “the offence of one.” If infants are included in “all men,” then are they brought under condemnation for the sin of Adam; and if so, then are they held guilty for the sin of Adam. Our only escape from this conclusion is, to say that “condemnation” does not imply guilt, but may consist with perfect innocence.

That the views we have expressed in relation to the hereditary guilt of infants are in accordance with the opinion of Wesley, and the leading and standard authors among his followers, we would now show by a few quotations.

First, from Wesley, “On Original Sin,” we make a few extracts;—they were either original with him, or fully endorsed by him. “The death expressed in the original threatening, and implied in the sentence pronounced upon man, includes all evils which could befall his soul and

body ; death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.” (Page 75.) “No just constitution can punish the *innocent* ; therefore, God does not look upon infants as innocent, but as involved in the *guilt* of Adam’s sin. Otherwise, death, the punishment denounced against that sin, could not be inflicted upon them.” (Page 171.) “However, then, the sufferings wherein Adam’s sin has involved his whole posterity, may try and purify us, in order to future and everlasting happiness, this circumstance does not alter their nature ; they are punishments still.” (Page 173.) “Where there is no sin, either personal or imputed, there can be no suffering.” (Page 185.) “Death did not come upon them (infants) as a mere natural effect of their father Adam’s sin and death ; but as a proper and legal punishment of sin ; for it is said, his sin brought condemnation upon all men. Now this is a legal term, and shows that death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants as guilty and condemned, not for their own actual sins, for they had none ; but for the sin of Adam, their legal head, their appointed representative.” (Page 259.) “If, notwithstanding this, all mankind in all ages have died, infants themselves, who cannot actually sin, not excepted, it is undeniable that guilt is imputed to all for the sin of Adam. Why else are they liable to that which is inflicted on none but for sin.” (Page 323.)

The following we quote from “Flecher’s Appeal :”—“If we are naturally innocent, we have a natural power to remain so, and by a proper use of it, we may avoid standing in need of the salvation procured by Christ for the lost.” (Page 123.)

The following we extract from the second volume of Watson’s “Institutes :”—“The fact of (infants) being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show that they were born under the whole malediction.” (Page 58.) “This free gift is bestowed upon all men (*eis*) *in order to* justification of life.” (Page 58.) “As to infants, they are not indeed born justified and regenerate ; so that to say, that original sin is taken away as to infants, by Christ, is not the correct view of the case.” (Page 59.) “It may well be matter of surprise, that the natural innocence of human nature should ever have had its advocates.” (Page 61.) “The full penalty of Adam’s offence passed upon his posterity.” (Page 67.) “A full provision to meet this case is, indeed, as we have seen, made in the gospel, but that does not affect the state in which men are born. It is a cure for an actual existing disease, brought by us into the world—for were not this the case, the evangelical institution would be one of prevention, not of remedy, under which light it is always represented.” (Page 67.) “Pain and death are the consequences only of sin, and absolutely innocent beings must be exempt from them.” (Page 68.) “The death and sufferings to which children

are subject, is a proof that all men, from their birth, are constituted, as the apostle has it, and treated as sinners." (Page 78.) "This benefit did not so come upon all men as to relieve them immediately from the sentence of death; as this is the case with adults, so, for this reason, it did not come immediately upon children, whether they die in infancy or not." (Page 58.) "The guilt of Adam's sin is charged upon his whole posterity." (Page 233.)

In the next place, we would notice some of the difficulties connected with the doctrine of the perfect innocence of infants, which doctrine has, indeed, been the fountain of many of the most pernicious heresies in the successive ages of the church.

1. It avows the principle that the stream is more perfect than the fountain whence it emanates. That we derive our nature, compound as it is, by descent, or natural generation, from Adam, all must admit. Adam, previously to this, had fallen; his nature was sinful and guilty: but if he imparted an innocent nature to his posterity, the stream must rise in perfection above its fountain. This not only involves an absurdity, but an express contradiction of the word of God; for we there read, that "Adam begat a son in *his own likeness* and after *his image*;" consequently, if his nature was guilty, so must have been that of his descendants.

2. It destroys the connection between cause and effect, and thus saps the foundation of all philosophy and reason. That death is the effect of sin and guilt, the Scriptures plainly declare. Now, if all guilt is taken away from infants, the effect of guilt exists, in their case, without a cause; nor can it, on Bible principles, be accounted for.

3. It overturns a radical and essential principle in the Divine government; which is, that the guilty, and not the innocent, are proper subjects of punishment. Now, if infants are perfectly innocent, it follows, as they are punished with death, that the just principles of government are destroyed.

4. It strikes at the foundation of the doctrine of redemption. For if infants are innocent, Christ came not to save them; he came "to save sinners."

I know that the effort has been made to counterbalance all these arguments, by starting such objections as the following:—

1. It is said that brutes suffer death; and we are asked, are they guilty? We reply, most assuredly they are, in the sense of imputation. On account of Adam's sin they suffer the forfeiture of their original state of happiness, and lie under the penalty of death; and this, according to the lexicographers, and the tenor of Scripture, is guilt.

2. It is objected that justified and even sanctified Christians suffer

death, and we are asked, are they, in any sense of the word, guilty? We reply, yes. They may be justified, and even sanctified in the Spirit, but sin and guilt attach to the body, as well as the soul. Soul and body were united in the transgression; and upon this compound nature, the penalty fell. It is guilt that will slay the body in death, and confine it in the tomb. From this part of the sentence of condemnation, the resurrection alone can free us. This is one sense in which Christ was “raised again for our *justification*.”

3. It is objected that it is absurd to say that an individual not actually guilty, should be made so, in view of the law, for the act of another. To which we reply, that it is no more absurd than that he should be made a sinner for the act of another; and the Scripture affirms that “by the *offence of one many were made sinners*.” This might appear absurd and unjust, were it disconnected with redemption, but such is an improper view; for had it not been for the provisions of redemption, none but the first unfortunate pair ever could have had a personal existence.

4. It is objected that although infants would be guilty, independent of redemption, yet Christ has removed their guilt, and they are all born innocent by virtue of his atonement. This objection has great weight with some, and, at first view, appears quite plausible; but upon close inspection it will vanish. What can this objection mean? “Infants would be guilty, independent of redemption.” Strange, indeed! Independent of redemption, they never could have existed; and who can comprehend a guilty nonentity? If they were only guilty as they existed seminally in Adam, then were they only redeemed as they existed seminally in Adam; for none but sinners needed redemption. According to this, it would follow that, after all, none were redeemed but the first pair; for none others were involved in the guilt. But if it still be urged that the atonement has removed the guilt of infants, we simply ask, has the atonement removed that which never existed? If infants are not, and never have been, guilty, it is clear that their guilt never could have been removed. The apostle does not say, “by one man’s disobedience many” would have been made sinners, had it not been for the atonement; but he says, “many were made sinners.” Now, if it be said, that they were only made sinners seminally, as they existed in Adam, we reply, that in the same sense they all disobeyed in Adam. Hence, according to this theory, the apostle should have said, to have spoken intelligibly, either, by one man’s disobedience one man was made a sinner; or, by the disobedience of many, many were made sinners. If it was only seminally that they were made sinners, seminally they actually disobeyed; and thus, according to this notion, the number that disobeyed was precisely equal to the number made sinners;

and thus the apostle's beautiful argument, to serve the purpose of a theory, is reduced to nonsense. Again; look at Rom. v. 18. "By the offence of *one*, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation." Can any believe that the apostle was here teaching us that all men were only condemned seminally, as they existed in Adam? If the condemnation was only theirs seminally, the offence also was theirs seminally, and it is nonsense to say of the "offence," that it was "by one man," but of the "condemnation," that it was "upon all men;" for, according to this theory, "all men" offended in the same sense in which they were condemned.

The atonement, as such, made no sinner immediately and absolutely righteous. The blood of Christ does not apply itself to the soul of man. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us." By the atonement of Christ, the "free gift" comes upon "all men," not to justify them immediately and unconditionally, but in order to justification of life; that is, the provision is made, the blood has been shed, and, according to God's plan, the Spirit applies it to the justification, not of those who always have been righteous, but of the ungodly. The adult is justified by faith, when he is born again. The infant is not required to believe, but if it die in infancy, the Spirit of God can create it anew, and fully justify and prepare it for heaven. Special attention should be given to the scope of the apostle's argument in the fifth chapter to the Romans. It runs thus; Death passes upon all men; therefore, all are guilty: and if all are thus seen to be guilty, he draws the conclusion that all alike need redemption, and that the "free gift has come" alike upon "*all*." If his argument proves all men to be sinners at all, it proves them to be such at the time death passes upon them. Hence it is plain that the notion that infants are made perfectly innocent through Christ, before they were ever made guilty, or before they existed, or as soon as they begin to exist, is both absurd and unscriptural.

Finally, we would say, if infants are only saved from becoming guilty sinners through Christ, then he is not their Redeemer from sin, but only a preventer. He does not deliver from disease, but only stands in the way, to prevent its approach.

If infants are not by nature guilty, under the sentence of the Divine law, then it will follow that justification may be by works; (which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine;) for the evangelical obedience under the gospel is not such as is impossible to be complied with; and if it be possible to comply with the evangelical requirements of the gospel, then, as there is no previous charge or ground of condemnation, it is possible for an individual to be justified by his own works.

If it be attempted to evade this, by saying that infants were guilty, but that Christ has removed that condemnation, so that they are born in

a justified state;—to this we reply, how can anything be affirmed or denied of that which has no existence? What kind of a condemnation is that which is pronounced against a being which never had any existence; and what kind of a justification is that which implies the removal of condemnation from a being which does not and never did exist? Indeed, such a supposititious, condemnation and justification are absurd. For, if the being condemned had no existence at the time, the condemnation could have had no existence; for no attribute, quality, or condition, can exist separate from the thing of which it is affirmed. And if the condemnation had no existence, the justification which removed it could have had no existence. Thus it appears that the notion that infants were condemned and justified both, before they had any existence, and that, consequently, they are born in a justified state, is an absurd fiction.

But if it still be insisted that Christ redeems infants from the sin and guilt which they would have inherited from Adam, but for the atonement, then it follows that Christ is only an imaginary Saviour, effecting imaginary redemption for imaginary sinners; and thus the whole scheme is reduced to a farce, and the very atonement itself is uprooted, and shown to be imaginary! We choose rather to abide by the plain Scripture, and look upon this notion of the perfect innocence of infants, and deliverance from guilt that never existed, as obviously untenable.

Thus have we endeavored to show that the doctrine of innate total depravity, as connected with the character of infants, is consistent with the nature of the Divine administration.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE X.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what respect has it been said that the doctrine of total depravity makes God the author of sin?</p> <p>2. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>3. How is this doctrine objected to from the supposition that we receive our souls immediately from God, by infusion?</p> <p>4. How is the objection answered?</p> <p>5. By what evidence is the natural descent of souls sustained?</p> <p>6. How is the doctrine of depravity objected to from the fact that there is much moral good among unregenerate men?</p> <p>7. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>8. What are the different theories presented in reference to infants?</p> <p>9. Who have advocated the first?</p> <p>10. The second? 11. The third?</p> <p>12. The fourth? 13. The fifth?</p> <p>14. The sixth?</p> <p>15. Which theory best accords with the Bible?</p> <p>16. In what does the sixth differ from the fourth?</p> <p>17. In what does it differ from the fifth?</p> <p>18. Who have believed in the destruction of infants?</p> | <p>19. From what quotations is this made to appear?</p> <p>20. What is the proof that all infants will be saved?</p> <p>21. What is the definition of <i>guilt</i> and <i>justification</i>?</p> <p>22. What Scriptures are brought to prove the <i>native guilt</i> of infants?</p> <p>23. From what divines are quotations brought?</p> <p>24. What are the <i>four</i> difficulties named in reference to the doctrine of the perfect innocence of infants?</p> <p>25. In what way are brutes referred to, in objecting to the doctrine of the guilt of infants?</p> <p>26. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>27. How is the objection answered, in reference to the death of justified and sanctified Christians?</p> <p>28. How is the objection, that it is absurd to make the innocent guilty for the act of another, answered?</p> <p>29. How is the objection, that the guilt of infants has already been removed through the atonement, answered?</p> <p>30. What Scripture is used in answering this objection?</p> |
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LECTURE XI.

THE ATONEMENT.—ITS NECESSITY.

THE word *Atonement* occurs but once in the New Testament, (Rom. v. 11.) In that passage the Greek is *καταλλαγήν*, from the verb *καταλλάσσω*, which means *to reconcile*.

It is, however, a word of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament. In the Hebrew, the word is *copher*, signifying, primarily, *to cover*, or *overspread*; but is constantly used to denote the *expiation* or *satisfaction* made for sin, by the various sacrifices and offerings presented under the law.

By lexicographers generally, the word is defined to mean *an expiation or satisfaction for an injury or offence*.

In a theological sense, by the *atonement*, we understand *the expiation or satisfaction made for sin, by the sufferings and death of Christ, whereby salvation is made possible to man*.

No subject belonging to Christianity has been thought to involve more intricacy, and certainly none possesses more importance, than the one now presenting itself to our consideration; therefore, it merits at our hands the closest thought and the most devout supplication, that in reference to this deeply interesting theme, we may be led to a clear perception of the “truth as it is in Jesus.”

It will readily be perceived that the great subject of redemption through the atonement of Christ is predicated upon, and intimately connected with, the state of man as a sinner, which has been the subject of discussion in several of the preceding lectures. Indeed, it is clear, that, if man be not a sinner, to provide a Saviour for his redemption would be perfectly useless. Redemption through Christ is obviously a scheme of recovery from the evils of the fall. It is a gracious remedy for the moral disease with which, as we have already seen, the nature of man is infected. To deny the existence of the disease, is to discard the necessity of the remedy. Hence, it would appear reasonable to suppose that our views of the nature of the remedy will be influenced by the light in which we view the disease for which it is provided. If we are heterodox on the one point, to preserve consistency throughout our system, we cannot be sound in the faith upon the other. Thus, it will be seen,

that, in proportion as the scriptural doctrine of depravity has been depreciated or discarded, so has the doctrine of atonement been explained away or denied.

Before we enter properly into the investigation of this subject, as presented in the Scriptures, it may be proper briefly to present the leading views which have been entertained upon it by different classes of theologians. That Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, and that his mission into our world, and his death and sufferings, are, in some way, connected with this great work, is freely admitted by all. But when we come to speak of the nature of the connection between the death of Christ and the salvation of man, a great diversity of sentiment, on points of vast importance, is at once seen.

The first theory which we shall notice upon this subject is generally denominated Socinianism, though it has been adopted by most of the modern Unitarians. The substance of this system we shall present in the language of Dr. Priestley, in his "History of the Doctrine of Atonement." The quotations have been collected and thrown together by Dr. Hill, in his "Lectures," as follows :

"The great object of the mission and death of Christ was to give the fullest proof of a state of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue ; and the making an express regard to the doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life the principal sanction of the laws of virtue, is an advantage peculiar to Christianity. By this peculiar advantage the gospel reforms the world, and remission of sin is consequent on reformation. For although there are some texts in which the pardon of sin seems to be represented as dispensed in consideration of the sufferings, the merit, the resurrection, the life, or the obedience of Christ, we cannot but conclude, upon a careful examination, that all these views of it are partial representations, and that, according to the plain general tenor of Scripture, the pardon of sin is, in reality, always dispensed by the free mercy of God upon account of man's personal virtue, a penitent, upright heart, and a reformed, exemplary life, without regard to the sufferings or merit of any being whatever."

From these extracts it appears, that the Socinians deny that Christ suffered in the room of sinners, to expiate their sins, and satisfy the demands of a broken law. According to their view, he only saves us, by leading us to the practice of virtue, through the influence of his example and instructions.

The second theory we shall notice is the Arian hypothesis. This, while it attaches more importance than the Socinians do to the death of Christ, denies that it was either vicarious or expiatory ; and so falls very far short of the proper Scripture view. This system represents Christ

as more than a mere man :—as a super-angelic being, the first and most exalted of creation ; and that his mission into our world was a wonderful display of benevolence ; inasmuch as he left the high honors of glory, and condescended to lead a life of toil and ignominy in the propagation of his religion ; and then to seal the truth of his doctrine with his own blood. Sufferings so great, say the Arians, by so exalted a character, although they are in no sense vicarious or expiatory, yet, are not without their influence, but constitute a powerful argument in favor of the salvation of sinners, since they form a sufficient ground for the Redeemer to claim the deliverance of all who repent and believe, as a reward for what he has done and suffered in their behalf. Thus, according to this view, the Saviour gains a power and dignity as a Mediator by his sufferings, though there is seen no special necessity for them, inasmuch as God, had he seen fit, could have extended salvation to man as consistently without as with those sufferings.

The theory which we have here presented has not only been advocated by the Arians, but, with little variation, has found favor with some divines having higher claims to orthodoxy ; such as Dr. Balguy of the established Church of England, and Dr. Price among the Dissenters. We will not now enter into the discussion of the peculiar character of the two schemes just presented ; but in the regular course of the investigation of the Scripture doctrine of the atonement, we trust, their refutation will be sufficiently obvious.

In pleading for their peculiar views on the subject of the atonement, the different parties have not only appealed to the Scriptures, but have instituted a course of reasoning founded upon the analogy of faith and the general tenor of revelation. Such a course of investigation, in reference to this subject, is by no means improper, provided both reason and revelation be allowed to occupy their proper position. But let it be remembered, that, while we may exercise our reason in reference to the correct understanding of what is plainly revealed, we are not at liberty, as professed Christians, to reason in opposition to the explicit declarations of the inspired Oracles. That this obviously important principle has always been observed, especially by those who have opposed the expiatory character of the atonement, can by no means be affirmed. Indeed, there is perhaps no subject, in the investigation of which, men have ventured further in bold and impudent assertion, in the very face of plain Scripture. Such has been the spirit of many who have written in opposition to what we conceive to be the true doctrine of the atonement, that they have been utterly incapable of making a fair statement of the doctrine they opposed. They have poured their vituperation and abuse upon a caricature of their own invention,—a creature of their own

imagination,—bearing scarcely a feature of resemblance to the acknowledged sentiments of those whom they opposed. But this will more fully appear as we proceed in the investigation of the doctrine.

1. The first point to which we invite attention is *the difficulties in the way of man's salvation, which rendered the atonement necessary*. Why was it, it is asked, that there was a necessity for the sufferings of the Son of God? To this we reply, that the great necessity for the atonement is founded upon the pure and unchangeable principles of the Divine government. But these must be considered in connection with the true character and condition of man, as well as the grand design of the Almighty in his creation. Let these important points be carefully examined, and the necessity for the great work of atonement will be clearly seen.

1. Then, we say, that in proposing to himself the creation of human beings, the Infinite Mind must have been swayed and determined by a design worthy the character of the Supreme Creator. This grand design or reason for the creation of man could not have been predicated upon the nature or character of man while as yet he had no actual existence, but must have been the result of the Divine perfections, in their independent operations. “I do not here introduce any external impulsive cause, as moving God unto the creation of the world; for I have presupposed all things distinct from him to have been produced out of nothing by him, and consequently to be posterior, not only to the motion, but the actuation of his will. Since, then, nothing can be antecedent to the creature beside God himself, neither can anything be a cause of any of his actions but what is in him; we must not look for anything extrinsical unto him, but wholly acquiesce in his infinite goodness, as the only moving and impelling cause.”—(Pearson on the Creed.)

From all that we can learn of the nature of God himself, and the character of his administration toward his creatures, we are led to infer, that, in the creation of man, the great object was the development of the Divine perfections, and the happiness of intelligent creatures. Anything repugnant to, or falling short of, this pure and exalted object, would be so derogatory to the Divine character, and so palpably inconsistent with what we see of the Divine administration, as to be utterly incapable of commanding the assent of an intelligent mind.

2. If it be admitted that the above statement, in reference to the design of God in our creation, is correct, we inquire, in the next place, whether the noble and exalted powers with which man was originally endued were in their nature calculated to promote this design? Now, it must be admitted, that the Almighty was not only perfectly free to

create or not to create, but also to create man *as* he was created, or a being of vastly superior or inferior powers. This being the case, it must follow, that infinite wisdom saw that the grand design of creation would be best promoted by producing beings of precisely the character with which man was primarily constituted. If we deny this conclusion, we arraign the Divine perfections, and charge the Creator with folly! As we dare not do this, we inquire, what was the primitive character of man? We learn from St. Paul, that "he was made a little lower than the angels;" that "he was crowned with glory and honor;" that he was "set over the works" of the Divine hand; and that "all things" were put in "subjection under his feet." Now, it appears from this that man was originally formed, not only superior to inanimate creation, — to stocks and stones that cannot feel, — but also superior to irrational, sentient existences, — to "birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." In a word, he was made a free and morally accountable agent. Endued with rational powers, capable of discerning between right and wrong, he was a being calculated to reflect the glories of the great Creator, by a proper exercise of the exalted powers conferred upon him. He was capable of enjoying God, from which alone solid happiness can spring. And this capacity resulted from his nature, as a free moral agent. Hence it will appear, that the endowment of free agency, originally conferred upon man, was calculated to promote his own happiness, and to exhibit the glorious perfections of the Creator, which, as we have seen, accords with the grand design in creation

3. From the character of man as a free moral agent, it necessarily follows that he must be placed under a law adapted to his nature. There is apparent a fitness and harmony throughout the system of the universe, which necessarily results from the perfections of him who made all things. The various parts of the works of God are placed in situations suitable to their nature; thus the fish are assigned to the aqueous element, while the birds are allowed to fly in the air. The entire material universe is placed under a system of government correspondent to its nature, known by the appellation of *physical laws*, or *laws of nature*. To have placed mere matter under a system of moral government, would have been a blunder too glaring to have been possible for infinite wisdom. Equally absurd would it be for irrational, sentient beings to be placed under a law suited only either to unorganized, lifeless matter, or intellectual moral agents. How then could we suppose that the infinitely wise Creator would produce a race of rational, intelligent beings, endued with free moral agency, as we have seen man to be, and leave them either without a law for the government of their actions, or place them under a system of government not suited to

their nature? The idea is most preposterous, and disgraceful to the Divine character. To have placed man under the regulation of laws only suited to lifeless matter, would have been to reduce him to the character of a clod or a pebble; to have placed him under laws suited to irrational, sentient beings, would have been to reduce his character to the level of "the beasts which perish;" but to have left him entirely destitute of law, would have been to strike him from existence at a blow; for all creation, whether material or immaterial, whether rational or irrational, is, by the wise arrangement of the great Ruler of the universe, placed under a system of government completely adapted to the diversified character of the things to be governed.

This beautiful and harmonious adaptation of law to the character of the creatures of God, necessarily results from the infinite perfection of the Creator; so that it cannot possibly be otherwise, unless we would destroy the Divine government, and annihilate the perfections of Jehovah. From the principles here laid down, the truth of which we think cannot be denied, it will necessarily follow, that either to have left man without a rule for the government of his conduct, or to have given him a law not suited to his character as a moral agent, would have been either to have made him something entirely different from what he was, to have destroyed his very existence, or, what is far worse, to have deranged or annihilated the perfections of the great Creator himself.

4. In the next place, we would notice that this law, adapted to the character of man, under which we have seen that he must have been placed, must necessarily be of such a character that man may either obey or disobey it. Whatever theory we may adopt in reference to the freedom of the human will, if it would deprive an accountable moral agent of the power to do either good or evil, we may rest assured that it is false. A moral, accountable agent must, of necessity, possess this power; otherwise you might as well speak of rewarding the sparks for "flying upwards," or of punishing the rivers for discharging their waters into the ocean. Hence it will follow, that the law under which man was placed was such that he might have kept it, although he was free to disobey it. There is no possible way of avoiding this conclusion but by denying the character in which man was created, which, as already shown, would arraign the attributes of his Creator.

Again; as the grand design of the Almighty, in the creation of man, was *that his own glory might be displayed in the happiness of his creatures*, it was, therefore, necessary, for the attainment of this end, to promote the *obedience and virtue* of man. That happiness is necessarily connected with obedience and virtue, is one of the plainest principles

of philosophy, as well as religion. "To be good is to be happy," has become a maxim of acknowledged truth. Vice produces misery, as a necessary and invariable consequence. Hence the Almighty, in order to secure the happiness of man, endeavored, by all appropriate means, to secure his obedience and virtue. But this could only be accomplished by placing him under appropriate law; for where there is no law or rule of action, there can be no obedience, no transgression, no virtue, no vice; in a word, without law, there can be neither moral good or evil; there can be no distinction in the qualities of actions; nor can we see how an intelligent, accountable agent could exist.

5. In the next place, it would follow, that, in order to carry out the original design of the happiness of man, this suitable law must be plainly prescribed. A law unrevealed can be of no avail. How can man be expected or required to perform his duty, unless he be informed of its nature? Hence, at the first creation, the Almighty made a plain revelation of his will to man. None can know the mind of God, but by revelation from him; hence, to deny revelation would be to deny that the will of God is the law under which man is placed; or otherwise we must deny the accountability of man, and discard the entire system of rewards and punishments.

6. But, in the next place, it must be obvious, that the revelation to man of a suitable law for the government of his conduct, can be of no avail unless there be affixed an adequate penalty. In fact, a law without a penalty is a contradiction in terms, — a manifest absurdity. The moment you abstract the penalty, the quality of *law* ceases, and the command can be nothing more than *mere advice*. Therefore, we see clearly the propriety, and even the absolute necessity, of annexing to the law an adequate penalty. With Divine authority and consistent propriety it was said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

It has been contended by some, who admit the propriety of what they would be pleased to call an adequate penalty, that the penalty of death, here specified, was unnecessarily severe; therefore, although this point has been touched in the discussion of the fall of man, some further observations may, in this place, be necessary.

It must, then, be admitted, in the first place, that the prime object of penalty is to prevent crime, so far as this can be accomplished without destroying the moral agency and accountability of man. Had it been possible so to frame the penalty of the law as either to prevent the possibility of obedience on the one hand, or of disobedience on the other, the necessary consequence would have been, that man could no longer be rewardable or punishable, but must sink to the station of inanimate

or irrational creation. Hence, it is plain, that, in the selection of the penalty for the Adamic law, the Almighty not only had respect to the prevention of crime, and the promotion of the happiness of his creatures, but also to the preservation of the great principles of his moral government, as well as the security to man of the high dignity of free moral agency and accountability to God. When these great essential objects, for the accomplishment of which the penalty was designed, are taken into the account, it is utterly impossible for man, with his limited powers, to say, without the most daring presumption, that the penalty was not the most appropriate that could possibly have been selected. It is certain that, if the penalty has any influence at all, in proportion as it is increased in severity will the probability of obedience be increased. Therefore, to say that the threatened penalty was too severe, is in effect to say that the probability for disobedience, and consequent misery, should have been rendered greater than it was. With how little semblance of reason this can be contended for, will be manifest, when we reflect that, great as the penalty was, it did not absolutely secure obedience; the event shows that man did transgress. Surely, then, there could have been no necessity for adding to the probability of that event. We think it must be admitted that it is impossible for man, *a priori*, to determine how great the penalty must have been, to have destroyed his accountability, by giving too great security to obedience; or how small it must have been, to have destroyed his accountability, by giving too great security to disobedience. For anything that we can certainly know, the smallest increase or diminution of the penalty might have wrested from man his character as a free moral agent, and rendered him utterly unfit for either reward or punishment. Once more; that it is obviously inconsistent for a believer in the truth of revelation to cavil about the nature of the penalty of the original law, must be admitted, when we reflect that it amounts, virtually, to an impeachment of the Divine attributes. To say that the Divine Being did not so comprehend the entire character and relations of his own creatures, as to know certainly what description of penalty was the best calculated to promote his grand design in creation, is directly to assail his wisdom. To say that he chose to affix one penalty to the law, when he knew that another was better suited to the grand end in view, is an impudent attack upon his goodness. Hence it will follow, that, unless we venture to assail the Divine perfections, if we admit the truth of revelation, which declares explicitly, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," we are compelled to admit that the annexed penalty was the most appropriate, and the best calculated to promote the grand design in man's creation, of any that could have been selected. He

whose wisdom and goodness are so gloriously exhibited throughout his works, in the perfect adaptation of the means to the end, cannot be supposed, in reference to the moral government of man, the most important being belonging to sublunary creation, to have blundered so egregiously as to have selected inappropriate means for the accomplishment of his excellent and glorious purpose.

7. The only remaining consideration, in order that we may arrive at the ground of necessity for the atonement, is for us to ascertain whether there was a necessity for the execution of the penalty, after the law had been violated; or whether it might have been remitted, independent of satisfaction or expiation? To this inquiry we would reply, that every consideration which urged the propriety of the threatening, or even of the establishment of the law itself, with equal propriety and force demanded the execution of the penalty. To affix a penalty to a law, and then permit disobedience to pass with impunity, and the threatened penalty to be entirely forgotten or disregarded, would be perfect mockery. Therefore, when man transgressed, the truth, justice, mercy, and all the attributes of God, as well as the stability and honor of the eternal throne itself, cried aloud for the execution of the penalty of the violated law.

1. Those who have denied the necessity, and consequently the reality, of the atonement, have contended that the Almighty might, consistently, by the exercise of his mere prerogative, as Governor of the universe, have extended pardon to the sinner, without any satisfaction or condition whatever. To this we would reply, that perhaps such might be the case, provided the Almighty were destitute of moral character, and regardless of moral principle. But a little reflection will show that such a course of procedure would be at war with the holy and immutable perfections of God.

(1.) God had positively denounced the penalty, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt *surely die*." This was the unequivocal language of God himself. Had no regard been paid to this after man had transgressed, where would have been the *truth* of God? And what kind of a lesson on the subject of veracity would herein have been inculcated upon the intelligent universe?

(2.) Upon this principle, where would have been the *justice* of God? Had not the affixing of the penalty been in accordance with the eternal rectitude of the Divine character, it never could have been threatened; and if so, it will necessarily follow that the same immutable principles of rectitude which first authorized the penalty will require its execution. Indeed, to say that God has a right to remit a threatened penalty, independent of satisfaction or atonement, is to deny that he has the right

to execute it; for a right to inflict a penalty or punishment can only be founded upon the supposition that it is just; and if it be in accordance with justice to inflict the penalty, it must follow that if it be not inflicted the claims of justice are infringed. Again; upon the supposition that God has a right to remit any penalty, by the mere exercise of his prerogative, it would follow, that, upon the same principle, he may remit every penalty, and that not only in reference to its severity, but to its whole extent and influence. And if it be right, according to the principles of justice, to remit all penalty and punishment, it cannot be consistent with goodness to inflict any punishment whatever; for it is most clear, that the goodness of God must always seek the happiness of his creatures, so far as it can be done consistently with his rectitude. Thus it would appear, that pardon without an atonement, on the principle of prerogative, would deprive the Almighty of all right to punish offenders, nullify the principles of justice, and overturn the government of God altogether.

(3.) But, in the next place, it may easily be seen, that the above plan of pardon by prerogative, independent of atonement, is also repugnant to the goodness of God. The grand object of law is the happiness and well-being of the intelligent universe. The great Governor of all cannot act upon the principle of clearing the guilty without inflicting a positive injury on the innocent; for it is to the interest of all intelligent beings, that the Divine government be sustained. Upon its stability depends not only their happiness, but their very existence itself. Let it be known that crime is not to be punished, that law is merely a form, and threatened penalty but a mockery, and who can tell the consequence that would immediately result throughout the vast extent of God's moral dominions? A license for universal rebellion would be proclaimed; and soon the intelligent universe would become a ruinous wreck. With such an example of disregard for principle in the Divine administration before them, what hope could there have been that man, or any of the subjects of God's moral government, could afterward have paid any regard to the Divine command? Therefore, the Divine goodness itself, which would prevent the universal prevalence of anarchy and rebellion, and the consequent misery and eternal ruin of millions of worlds, joins her voice with the pleadings of justice, for the honor and security of the Divine throne, for the preservation of the principles of immutable rectitude in the Divine administration, and for the promotion of the happiness of God's intelligent creatures, in opposition to the ruinous scheme of pardon by prerogative, independent of atonement.

2. In the next place, we will notice that some have contended, that, even if there were a doubt with regard to the propriety of extending

pardon by prerogative to all classes of transgressors indiscriminately, there can be no doubt of its propriety and fitness on the condition of repentance. This is the ground taken by Socinus, and it has been strenuously insisted upon by Dr. Priestley, and the modern Socinians and Unitarians generally. But that it is alike repugnant to reason, fact, and Scripture, we think may be easily shown.

(1.) Let it be remembered, that to plead for the propriety of pardon on the ground of repentance, is, in effect, to acknowledge that it cannot consistently be conferred by the mere prerogative of God, by which it has been contended that he may relax his law at pleasure, and relinquish his right to punish the sinner. To say that repentance is required as the condition, is to admit that there is something in the principles of unbending rectitude, by which the Divine government is swayed, that would render it improper to pardon offenders indiscriminately, merely on the principle of mercy. This scheme, then, evidently acknowledges the necessity of a satisfaction of some kind, in order to pardon; but the question is, whether that satisfaction is bare repentance. Here we may observe, in the second place, that the word repentance, in the Scriptures, is taken in two different senses; but in neither acceptance can it furnish a just and independent ground for pardon. 1. It means sorrow for sin, induced solely by the apprehension or realization of the dreadful punishment and misery necessarily resulting therefrom, without being founded upon any pure principle of hatred to sin on account of its intrinsic moral evil, or leading to any genuine reformation of heart and life. The dispensing of pardon upon a repentance of this kind, is not only destitute of the least countenance from fact and Scripture, but it would be as completely subversive of all moral government as if no condition were required whatever. If this principle were admitted, it would follow that God is bound to extend pardon to every repentant criminal, and that, too, as soon as he begins to repent. This is contradicted by the fact that all men, even after they repent of their sins, are left in this world to suffer more or less the evil consequences thereof. Now, if repentance is the only and sufficient ground for pardon, every repentant sinner should immediately be released from all punishment whatever. But again; is it not evident that any sinner, so soon as all hope of advantage from crime were gone, and he began to feel the just punishment of his sins, would immediately begin to repent; and thus no sooner would the punishment begin to be felt, than it would be removed? This would, in effect, overturn all government, and proclaim complete and immediate indemnity for all transgression.

(2.) In the next place, repentance, in the Scriptures, is taken for that sincere and heartfelt sorrow for sin, on account of its intrinsic evil and

offensiveness in the sight of a holy God, which leads to a reformation of heart and life, from pure and evangelical principle. In reference to a repentance of this kind, we would say, in the first place, that, independent of grace received through the atonement of Christ, it is utterly out of the power of any man thus to repent. This necessarily follows from the totally depraved character of man as a fallen sinner, which has already been discussed. Now, to make this repentance, which can only result from the atonement of Christ, a consideration by which the necessity of that atonement shall be superseded, is manifestly absurd. But even if we admit the possibility of repentance, in the full sense of the word, independent of the atonement, this repentance could nevertheless be no just ground for pardon. It could not change the relation of the sinner to the violated law. He would still be charged with the guilt of transgression, however penitent he might be. This guilt nothing but pardon can remove. Were it the case that repentance could remove the guilt of the sinner, independent of pardon, then pardon itself would be entirely superseded. Again; it is clear that repentance, however sincere it may be, and however great the immediate benefits resulting from it, can have no retrospective bearing, so as to cancel past offence. Were it true that full and immediate pardon flows directly consequent upon repentance, then it would follow that the broken constitution of the intemperate, the wasted fortune of the profligate, and the blasted character of the criminal, would, upon reformation of heart and life, immediately be restored; but such is evidently not the fact. As in reference to the things of this life, repentance, while it may deliver us from falling again into such crimes and misfortunes as we have forsaken and endeavored to escape, cannot immediately deliver us from the bitter consequences of past misdoings and folly; so, upon the same principle, in reference to spiritual things, while it may prevent a further accumulation of guilt, and an exposure to increased punishment, it cannot affect the past, so as to remove the guilt, and release from the punishment already contracted and incurred.

Again; to suppose that repentance can purchase exemption from punishment incurred by past offence, is to suppose that we are not continually indebted to God the full tribute of all the service we are capable of rendering. If the service of to-day may not only meet the demands of God upon us for the time being, but also enable us to satisfy the unliquidated claims of yesterday, then it follows that it is possible for us to perform works of supererogation; — to do more than God requires of us, and thus procure a surplus of merit, which we may transfer to the benefit of our more destitute neighbor; or by which we may accumulate an account in our own favor, so as to bring the Almighty, according to

strict principles of law, actually in our debt. How absurd the hypothesis !

Once more ; a close examination of the subject will show, that pardon, upon the principle of repentance alone, is self-contradictory and absurd. To say that pardon is predicated upon repentance, is to admit that it cannot take place otherwise ; and if so, then it would follow that there must be a hindering cause : but no hindering cause can exist, except the obligations of the Almighty to maintain the principles of his moral government. But if the Almighty is under obligations to maintain the principles of his moral government then it will follow that he is not at liberty to pardon, even the penitent offender, without an atonement or expiation for past guilt ; for the law denounces "death as the wages of sin," irrespective of penitence or impenitence. Thus it appears that pardon for sin without atonement, whether the sinner be penitent or impenitent, would be repugnant to the principles of law ; and this plan of pardon would abrogate the Divine government, as really as it could be done by the system of pardon on the principle of mere prerogative.

Finally ; the Scriptures give no countenance to either of these modes of pardon. It is therein declared that God "will by no means clear the guilty." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death ;" and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." These are the statutes of the Divine government ; and they stand with equal force against the penitent and the impenitent ; nor can they, in the least, mitigate their rigor, or release their hold upon the criminal, however penitent he may be, till their claims are met, and their full demands satisfied, by an adequate atonement. It is true that the Scriptures present the promise of mercy to the sincere penitent ; but it is not upon the ground or merit of repentance, but through the atoning sacrifice of him who is "exalted a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Thus have we seen that the necessity for the great work of the atonement of Christ is founded upon the principles of the Divine government, taken in connection with the grand design of the Almighty in the creation of man, as well as the true character of man as a free moral agent, who, by the abuse of that liberty, has fallen under the penalty of a violated law, and consequently lies in a state of guilt and misery.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the only passage in which the word atonement occurs in the New Testament?</p> <p>2. What is the Greek word there used, and what does it mean?</p> <p>3. What is the Hebrew word for atonement, and what does it mean?</p> <p>4. What is the definition as given by lexicographers generally?</p> <p>5. How is the word understood in a theological sense?</p> <p>6. Upon what important doctrine is the atonement founded?</p> <p>7. What is the Socinian view of the atonement?</p> <p>8. Explain the Arian view of the subject?</p> <p>9. What is the ground of necessity for the atonement?</p> <p>10. What was the grand design in the creation of man?</p> <p>11. What was the primitive character of man?</p> <p>12. Did that character accord with the design in creation?</p> <p>13. How does it appear necessary that man should have been placed under law?</p> <p>14. What description of law was essential for his government?</p> <p>15. From what does the adaptation of law to the subjects result?</p> <p>16. Why was it necessary that man should be capable of either obeying or disobeying the law?</p> | <p>17. Why was it requisite to promote the obedience of man?</p> <p>18. What was the only method by which this could be accomplished?</p> <p>19. Why was it requisite that the law should be prescribed?</p> <p>20. Why was the affixing of a penalty necessary?</p> <p>21. How can it be shown that the most suitable penalty was selected?</p> <p>22. Why was it necessary to execute the penalty?</p> <p>23. What two grounds of pardon have been presented by those who deny the atonement?</p> <p>24. How does it appear that pardon on the principle of mere prerogative is impossible?</p> <p>25. Why cannot pardon be on the ground of repentance?</p> <p>26. In what two senses is repentance understood?</p> <p>27. How does it appear that pardon on the ground of repentance is repugnant to acknowledged fact?</p> <p>28. How does it appear that it is repugnant to Scripture?</p> <p>29. How is the necessity for the atonement shown in this lecture?</p> |
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LECTURE XII.

THE ATONEMENT.—ITS NATURE.

HAVING seen, in the preceding lecture, the necessity for the atonement, we now enter upon the investigation of its NATURE.

No subject connected with our holy religion has been attacked by unbelievers with more virulence than this. They have summoned to the onset the utmost power of invective and raillery which their ingenuity could devise and their venom employ. But in no part of their wanton assault upon the principles of religion have they more glaringly exhibited their disingenuousness and their ignorance. That they may oppose with success, they first misrepresent. Their version of the Christian doctrine of atonement has been generally presented in something like the following miserable caricature :—“ That the Almighty created man holy and happy ; but, because he simply tasted an apple, he instantly became enraged against him and all his posterity, until he had wreaked his vengeance by killing his own innocent Son, when he immediately got over his passion, and was willing to make friends with man.” Such is the horrible and blasphemous figment of the doctrine of atonement exhibited by infidels, for the fiendish purpose of scorn and ridicule. But how vastly different is this from the truth ! Let unbelievers first inform themselves correctly, and they will find less reason to scoff and deride.

But to the law and to the testimony. With the most implicit reliance upon its truth, we appeal to the Word of God for information upon the important subject before us.

I. We would endeavor to establish the grand and leading proposition, that *the death of Christ is, according to the Scriptures, the meritorious and procuring cause of man's salvation.* The whole doctrine of atonement is evidently based upon the proposition now before us ; and, consequently, we shall endeavor carefully to define the terms of the proposition, before we bring the subject to the test of Scripture.

1. Then, by the “ meritorious and procuring cause of salvation,” we mean more than is admitted upon the Socinian hypothesis. Even by this scheme, which perhaps the most of all schemes depreciates the merits of Christ, his death is not entirely discarded as useless, and in every sense of the word disconnected with human salvation. But if we

inquire in what sense the death of Christ is connected with salvation, according to this system, it will be seen to allow no *merit*, in the proper sense of the word, but only to admit an indirect influence to his death ; as it sealed the truth of his doctrine, honored him as a martyr, and thus became instrumental in leading men to repentance, by which they would necessarily be saved, whatever may be the circumstances or instrumentality by which that repentance is produced. By this scheme it will readily be seen that repentance, and not the death of Christ, is the meritorious cause of salvation ; and the death of Christ cannot, in the proper sense, be considered as strictly necessary ; since the death of any other being, as well as many other circumstances, might be instrumental in inducing men to repent.

2. By the “meritorious and procuring cause of salvation,” we mean more than is admitted by the modern Arian hypothesis. By this scheme, the death of Christ is only necessary to salvation as it gives an exhibition of his disinterested benevolence, in voluntarily submitting to sufferings so great in the behalf of others ; and thus enables him as Mediator to claim the salvation of sinners as his reward. This scheme, it may be observed, destroys the absolute necessity for the death of Christ, inasmuch as it makes salvation depend solely on the personal virtue and dignity of the character of the Mediator. Now it is clear that the actual sufferings of Christ could not add anything to the intrinsic virtue and personal dignity of his character. He was a being of the same exalted character before his incarnation, and possessed quite as much benevolence before his sufferings ; and it cannot be supposed that his actual humiliation and matchless sufferings were necessary to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Father, the excellency of the character of his immaculate Son. Had this been the only necessity for the death of Christ, well might it have been dispensed with ; and we may rest assured that the benevolence of the Father could never have required it.

But, by the phrase, “meritorious and procuring cause of salvation,” as applied to the death of Christ, we mean, 1. That there were obstructions in the way of man’s salvation, which could not possibly be removed without the death of Christ. 2. That his sufferings were vicarious and expiatory :—that he died in our room and stead, to satisfy the claims of law against us, and thereby to render it possible for God to extend to us the mercy of salvation, on such terms as his wisdom and goodness might devise and propose. This we present as the full and absolute sense in which the death of Christ was necessary to man’s salvation, and as the proper scriptural view in which the atonement of Christ is the “meritorious cause of salvation.” The doctrine here briefly stated occupies so important a position, and stands so conspicuously to view throughout the

entire volume of revelation, that a mere quotation of all the passages in which it is contained, would be a transcript of a large portion of the Holy Scriptures.

So deeply interwoven is the doctrine of atonement with the whole system of revelation, that it is not only expressly presented in numerous passages of the New Testament, but adumbrated, with a greater or less degree of clearness and force, in the types and predictions of the Old Testament. Many of these, it is true, considered in an isolated state, are not sufficiently definite and explicit to amount to satisfactory proof; but taken in connection with the general tenor of Scripture upon this subject, and with the direct and unequivocal declarations with which the whole system of revelation abounds, their evidence is too weighty to be entirely overlooked.

(1.) An intimation, too clear to be misunderstood, concerning the incarnation and sacrificial sufferings of Christ, is contained in the first promise or announcement of a Redeemer after the fall. Gen. iii. 15. God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here, we may observe, there is an intimation of a character styled the "seed of the woman," and consequently human in one sense, who must be superhuman, or at least superior to Adam, in another sense; for he is to "bruise the head" of the serpent, or gain a signal victory over him, who had just gained so great a triumph over Adam. Observe, in the second place, that this triumph is not to be a bloodless conquest;—it is not to be gained without a struggle, and, at least, some degree of suffering; for the serpent was to "bruise the heel" of "the seed of the woman." This evidently refers to the sufferings of Christ, by which redemption from the miseries of the fall was to be extended to man. Now, as Christ, who is universally admitted to be the "seed of the woman" here spoken of, "did no sin," but was perfectly innocent, we can see no consistency in his "heel being bruised," or in his being permitted to suffer in the least, unless it was by way of expiation, in the room and stead of others; therefore, we see in this ancient promise at least a dawn of light upon the doctrine of atonement through the sufferings of Christ.

(2.) Our next argument on this point is based upon the *sacrificial worship of the ancient patriarchs*. There can be but little doubt with regard to the origin of animal sacrifices. Were there no historic record upon this subject, it would appear, *a priori*, impossible for this system of worship to have originated with man. There is nothing in nature which could have led unassisted human reason to infer that God could be propitiated by the blood of slain victims. So far as reason alone is con-

cerned, a conclusion quite opposite to this would have been the most natural. Sacrificial worship must have originated by the appointment of God. This may be clearly inferred from the Mosaic history. Immediately after the fall, it is said, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Commentators are generally agreed that the skins here spoken of were taken from animals slain in sacrifice as a sin-offering to God. As yet, the ravages of death had not entered the world, nor had the use of animal food been allowed to man; therefore, the most rational inference is, that God, immediately after the fall and the first promise of a Redeemer, by his own express appointment, instituted sacrificial worship, connected with the duty of faith in him who, by the offering of himself in the fulness of time, was to "bruise the head of the serpent," and atone for the sins of the world. That this is the true origin of sacrifices, may be strongly inferred from the fact that Abel and others of the patriarchs were soon engaged in similar worship. It could not have been an invention of their own, for they are said to have performed it in faith, which clearly implies, not only the Divine authority for the institution, but also its typical reference to the promised Messiah, the great object of true faith in all ages.

The following remarks upon the passage before us are from the Commentary of Matthew Henry:—"Those coats of skin had a significancy. The beasts whose skins they were must be slain, slain before their eyes, to show them what death is, and, (as it is Eccl. iii. 18,) that they may see that they themselves are mortal and dying. It is supposed they were slain, not for food, but for sacrifice, to typify the great Sacrifice, which in the latter end of the world should be offered once for all: thus, the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'" The following comment upon the same words is from Dr. A. Clarke:—"It is very likely that the skins out of which their clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured out as a *sin offering* to God; for, as we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God, we may fairly presume that God had given them instructions upon this head; nor is it likely that the notion of a sacrifice could have ever occurred to the mind of man, without an express revelation from God. Hence we may safely infer, 1. That as Adam and Eve needed this clothing as soon as they fell, and death had not as yet made any ravages in the animal world, it is most likely that the skins were taken off victims offered under the direction of God himself, and in faith of Him who in the fulness of time was to make an atonement by his death. And, 2dly, it seems reasonable, also, that this matter should be brought about in such a way that Satan and death should have no triumph, when the very

first death that took place in the world was an emblem and type of that death which should conquer Satan, destroy his empire, reconcile God to man, convert man to God, sanctify human nature, and prepare it for heaven."

Again; in Gen. vii. 2, we find the distinction of clean and unclean beasts specially mentioned. As this was previous to the flood, and consequently at a time when the grant of animal food had not as yet been made to man, it presents a strong evidence of the Divine appointment of animal sacrifices at this early period. Unless we admit that God had given commandment for certain kinds of beasts to be offered in sacrifice, this distinction of clean and unclean beasts cannot be rationally accounted for. That this distinction was founded upon the Divine institution of sacrificial worship, is further evidenced by the fact, that Noah was commanded to take with him into the ark a greater number of clean than of unclean animals; and as soon as he came forth from the ark, he engaged in the work of sacrifice. Now, if the clean beasts were such as had been appointed as proper for sacrifice, and especially as Noah offered sacrifices immediately upon leaving the ark, the propriety of a greater number of that description of animals being preserved is at once manifest.

Since, then, we find satisfactory evidence that animal sacrifices were thus early established by Divine appointment, we cannot consistently deny that they were expiatory in their character. Death was declared to be the penalty of the original law; and it is one of the settled principles of the Divine government that "the wages of sin is *death*." From this it would appear, that, whatever may be the circumstances under which *death* takes place, it must have a direct connection with sin. This connection, so far as we can infer from the Scriptures, must either be of the nature of a penalty or of an atonement. If life be taken by the direct authority of God, and the being thus slain is not a substitute or an offering in the behalf of others, the death which thus takes place must be the infliction of the penalty of the violated law; but wherever the idea of substitution is recognized, and the sufferings of death by the appointment of God are vicarious, there is no rational way of accounting for them but upon the admission that they are also expiatory. Now, as God commanded animal sacrifices to be offered by the patriarchs, as an act of religious worship, the institution must have had reference to the condition, and been designed for the benefit, not of the animals sacrificed, but of him who presented the offering. And what could there have been connected with the character of man but sin, to require this bloody sacrifice in his behalf? And in what way could man have

derived any benefit therefrom, unless it was intended, in some sense, to expiate or atone for his sins?

Thus we discover that, from the very nature of animal sacrifices, their expiatory character may be rationally inferred. And in order to make the argument from the patriarchal sacrifices conclusive, in the establishment of the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ, it is only necessary for us to admit that those sacrifices were typical of the great and only availing Sacrifice for sin. That this important point stands prominently recognized in the whole tenor of Scripture, will be abundantly seen in the sequel of this investigation.

The first act of sacrifice to God, of which we have any express record, is that of Cain and Abel, in Gen. iv. 3 — 7. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." With this account of the transaction we must connect St. Paul's comment upon the same, in Heb. xi. 4. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

In reference to the transaction here recorded, there has been much written both for and against the Divine appointment and expiatory character of the patriarchal sacrifices. But it is not necessary to our purpose to enter specially upon the many questions, in connection with this subject, which have engaged the attention of commentators and critics. We shall, however, endeavor to point out several circumstances connected with this sacrifice, which plainly indicate its expiatory character and typical reference to Christ, and which cannot be satisfactorily explained upon any other hypothesis.

(1.) Let it be noted, that, according to the comment of the apostle, the sacrifice of Abel was offered "*by faith*." When we examine what is said in reference to the ancient worthies in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, we discover that their faith rested on certain promises; and the clear inference is, that such must also have been the case with the faith of Abel. But let us inquire what that promise was. Here, if we deny that Abel, in this transaction, was acting under Divine instructions, in the performance of a religious service, we see no possible way in which his sacrifice could have been "*offered by faith*." Hence we

have the plainest evidence that this sacrificial worship was by the express appointment of God. Again; unless we admit that the victims he presented were a sin-offering, expiatory in their character, and adumbrative of the offering of Christ as an atonement for the sins of the world, we can see no suitable object for the faith of Abel to have embraced in connection with the offering presented; nor can we see the least significancy in the character of the sacrifice. But if we admit that the offering of animal sacrifice by Abel was according to the appointment of God,—a typical representation designed to direct the faith to the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,”—the whole subject is at once plain and impressive.

(2.) Notice the peculiar character of the offering of Abel, as contradistinguished from that of Cain. The latter “brought of the fruit of the ground;” but the former “brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.” Now if we admit that animal sacrifices, by the express appointment of God, were at once an acknowledgment by the sacrificer of his own sin, and of his faith in the great atoning Sacrifice, the reason why the offering of Abel was “better” and more successful than that of Cain is at once obvious; but if we deny this, we can see no reason for the superiority of the one offering to the other.

(3.) The apostle styles the offering of Abel “a *more excellent* sacrifice” than that of Cain. The word *αλτιορα*, here rendered *more excellent*, has been the subject of criticism with the learned. Some have contended that it means a greater quantity, and others, a better quality or kind of offering. The translation of Wickliffe, it cannot be denied, is as literal a rendering as can be made. As Archbishop Magee has observed, though “it is uncouth, it contains the full force of the original. It renders the passage ‘a *much more* sacrifice,’ &c.” Whatever may be the conclusion in reference to the sense in which this “much more” is to be taken,—whether it relates to *nature*, *quantity*, or *quality*,—it must be admitted that it points out the peculiarity in the offering of Abel, which gave it superiority with God over that of Cain, and became the testimony to Abel “that he was *righteous*.” Now if God had ordained by express command that “righteousness” or justification was to be obtained by faith in the atoning Saviour, and had instituted animal sacrifice as the typical representation of that atonement, the reasonableness and propriety of the whole procedure,—the offering of Abel, the respect that God had to his offering, the righteousness he thereby obtained, and the Divine testimony it gave him that his gifts were accepted,—are all clearly exhibited. But if this be denied, we see no way of accounting for and explaining these circumstances. Hence we conclude, that in the “offering” of Abel we have a clear typical repre-

sensation of the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ. The following is presented by Archbishop Magee, as a brief summary of the conclusion of many of the ancient divines upon this subject. "Abel, in firm reliance on the promise of God, and in obedience to his command, offered that sacrifice which had been enjoined as the religious expression of his faith; while Cain, disregarding the gracious assurances that had been vouchsafed, or at least disdaining to adopt the prescribed mode of manifesting his belief, possibly as not appearing to his reason to possess any efficacy or natural fitness, thought he had sufficiently acquitted himself of his duty in acknowledging the general superintendence of God, and expressing his gratitude to the Supreme Benefactor, by presenting some of those good things which he thereby professed to have been derived from his bounty. In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits the first fruits of his parent's disobedience, in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason rejecting the aids of revelation, because they fell not within its apprehension of right. He takes the first place in the annals of Deism, and displays, in his proud rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice the same spirit, which, in latter days, has actuated his enlightened followers, in rejecting the sacrifice of Christ."

The next instance of patriarchal sacrifices which we shall mention is the case of Noah, immediately on his leaving the ark; recorded in Gen. viii. 20, 21. "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." Here, in order that we may see that Noah performed this act of worship in compliance with a previous appointment of God, it is only necessary for us, 1. To reflect on the despatch with which he engages in the work when he comes forth from the ark. There is no time for the exercise of his inventive genius, which we may suppose would have been requisite had he not previously been familiar with this mode of worship. 2. He "took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl;" which is an evidence that the distinction of clean and unclean animals was an appointment of God in reference to sacrifice, and consequently that the system of sacrifice connected with this distinction was also an appointment of God. 3. The Lord approved this sacrifice,—he "smelled a sweet savor;" which he could not have done had not this mode of worship been in accordance with his own institution. 4. The sacrifice of *clean* animals here presented was typical of the atonement of Christ. This may be seen by the allusion to this passage in the language of Paul, in Eph. v. 2. "Christ hath loved us, and given him-

self for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a *sweet-smelling savor*." Here, the words *οσμην ευωδιας*, used by the apostle, are the same found in the Septuagint in reference to the sacrifice of Noah.

Again; in Gen. xv. 9, 10, we see the patriarch Abraham, on a memorable occasion in which he received a renewal of the gracious promise of God, engaging in the performance of animal sacrifice with the Divine approbation. "And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not." In reference to this passage, Dr. Clarke says, "It is worthy of remark, that every animal allowed or commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law, is to be found in this list. And is it not a proof that God was now giving to Abram an epitome of that law and its sacrifices which he intended more fully to reveal to Moses; the essence of which consisteth in its sacrifices, which typified 'the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world?'"

We would only add, that we have, in this coincidence of the animals sacrificed by Abraham, and under the Mosaic law, a clear demonstration that the patriarchal sacrifices were of Divine appointment; otherwise, this coincidence is unaccountable.

In the 22d chapter of Genesis we have a record of the remarkable faith of Abraham, in presenting his son Isaac as a burnt-offering on Mount Moriah, in obedience to the Divine command. In Heb. xi. 17—19, we have the comment of St. Paul upon this subject: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

We have in this transaction, 1. A clear proof that animal sacrifices were originally instituted by Divine appointment. This is evidenced by the considerations, that God expressly commanded Abraham to go to Mount Moriah, and there offer a burnt-offering; that Abraham spoke of his intended sacrifice as of a service to which he had been accustomed; that Isaac, by asking the question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" discovered a familiarity with that mode of worship; and that God actually provided the lamb to be sacrificed instead of Isaac. All these circumstances testify that sacrificial worship was an institution of God. 2. We here have a lively type of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Abraham is said to have received Isaac "from the dead *in a figure*." The word here rendered *figure* is *παροβολη*, *parable or type*. Macknight

paraphrases it thus : “ *From whence on this occasion he received him, by being hindered from slaying him, even in order to his being a type of Christ.*” As we have here the testimony of the apostle to the fact that Abraham’s sacrifice was adumbrative of the offering of Christ on Calvary for the sins of the world, we deem it unnecessary to dwell upon the many striking points of analogy between the type and antitype.

On the subject of the sacrifices of the patriarchs, the case of Job is worthy of particular attention. With regard to the period in which this patriarch lived, there has been considerable controversy. Some have supposed that he lived subsequent to the giving of the law ; but the more probable opinion is, that he was cotemporary with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. At any rate, he does not appear to have been acquainted with the Mosaic ritual, or we might reasonably expect to find connected with his history some allusion to the giving of the law. It is true, some have contended, and Dr. A. Clarke among the number, that the circumstance of Job offering “ *burnt-offerings*” to God is a proof that he was acquainted with the Mosaic institution, and consequently that he lived subsequently to the exodus from Egypt. But, in reply to this, it may be said, that Abraham and Noah also presented “ *burnt-offerings*” to God, and the same argument would prove that they also were acquainted with the Mosaic institution, which we know to be contrary to the fact of the history. The most consistent opinion is, that Job was cotemporary with the ante-Mosaic patriarchs, and that we have in his history a comment upon the patriarchal religion, previous to the general spread of idolatry among the descendants of Noah.

An account of the sacrifice of Job is recorded in Job i. 5. “ And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, (his sons and daughters,) and rose up early in the morning, and offered *burnt-offerings* according to the number of them all : for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.” That this mode of sacrifice was the regular practice of Job, and that the decided testimony is that he was pious and exemplary, are sufficient evidence that he was acting in obedience to a Divine command, received through tradition or otherwise. But the fact that the supposition that his sons might have sinned was given as the reason for the sacrifice, is clear proof that it was expiatory in its character, and a typical representation of the great sacrifice of Christ.

To all that has been said in reference to the Divine appointment and typical and expiatory character of the sacrifices of the patriarchal dispensation, it has been objected, that the Mosaic history contains no direct account of the Divine origin, and no express declaration of the expiatory

character of these sacrifices. It is a sufficient reply to the above, to know that Moses does not profess to give a complete history of the patriarchal religion. What he says upon the subject is incidental and exceedingly brief. There is no express account of any moral code being delivered to the patriarchs between the time of the fall and the law of Moses ; yet the fact that "Abel's works were *righteous*," and Cain's works "were *evil*," is sufficient testimony that God had in some way prescribed to them their duty. Even so the fact that God sanctioned the patriarchal sacrifices with his express approval, is clear evidence that they originated not in the invention of men, but in the appointment of God.

Again ; we have the direct proof from the New Testament that Moses did not think it necessary to give a complete and full account of everything connected with the patriarchal religion. Enoch prophesied concerning the day of judgment, and Abraham looked for a "heavenly inheritance, a better country ;" and yet Moses makes no record of the prophesying of the one, or of the promise on which the faith of the other was predicated. Therefore we conclude, that the above objection to the view we have taken of the Divine origin and typical and expiatory character of the animal sacrifices of the ancient patriarchs, is perfectly groundless ; and the argument derived from those sacrifices, for the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ, is seen to be conclusive.

3. In the next place, we would notice *the sacrifices prescribed under the Mosaic law*. The argument for the expiatory character of the death of Christ, derived from this source, will not require an extensive and minute examination of the entire system of sacrificial worship as it is presented in the Mosaic dispensation. If it can be shown that animal sacrifices therein enjoined were expiatory in their character, and divinely constituted types of the sufferings and death of Christ, the true character of the atonement of Christ will be thereby established.

That we may the better understand the nature and design of the sacrifices under the law, we will first notice that the Mosaic law itself consisted of three distinct, though connected, parts ;—the *moral*, the *ceremonial*, and the *political*.

(1.) The *moral* law is summarily embraced in the decalogue, but comprehends also all those precepts, throughout the books of Moses and the prophets, which, being founded in the nature of God and of man, are necessarily and immutably obligatory upon all rational and accountable creatures, without regard to time, place, or circumstance. In this acceptation of the term, the law of God is essentially the same in all ages ; and the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations are only

different developments or exhibitions of the same grand principles of righteousness.

(2.) The *ceremonial* law comprehends that system of forms and religious ceremonies which God prescribed for the regulation of the worship of the Israelitish nation, and which constituted the peculiar characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation. This law had respect to times and seasons, — to days, months, and years; but it especially embraced the regulations of the priesthood, the stated assemblages and regular festivals of the people, and the entire system of sacrificial worship.

(3.) The *political* law comprehended the civil jurisprudence of the Jewish people. This law was of Divine appointment, but related peculiarly to the government of the Israelitish nation. It defined the rights, prescribed the mode of settling the controversies, and had jurisdiction over the lives of individuals.

This threefold character of law, under which the Jews, during the Mosaic dispensation, were placed, must render their entire legal code somewhat complex; and admonish us, that, when sin is spoken of with them, it must be the transgression of one or more of these laws; and care should be taken to ascertain to what law it has reference. This important point being borne in mind, it will not be presumed that the taking away of sin through the peculiar sacrifices of the ceremonial law was properly a moral ablution. As these sacrifices belonged to the ceremonial law, it is only contended that they were expiatory in a ceremonial sense. The atonement which they made was not a real acquittal from the guilt of moral transgression; it was a ceremonial cleansing. The distinction here specified is clearly recognized by St. Paul, in Heb. x. 4: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should *take away sins*." Here, the apostle is evidently speaking of the removal of moral guilt, or sin in view of the moral law. *This*, ceremonial sacrifices could only remove in a ceremonial, and not a moral sense.

In Heb. ix. 13, the apostle speaks of the ceremonial cleansing and expiation of the sacrifices of the law, in these words: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, *sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh*," &c. Here we perceive that the same sacrifices, which we had just seen could not remove moral pollution, or cleanse the conscience, were efficacious in the removal of ceremonial pollution, or in the cleansing of the body. Now, if it can be shown that the sacrifices under the law were expiatory in a ceremonial point of view, and that this ceremonial expiation was typical of the only proper expiation for sin under the gospel, the argument from this subject, for the expiatory character of the death of Christ, will then be sufficiently manifest. It should further be remembered, that it is not necessary to

this argument that *all* the sacrifices of the law should be shown to be expiatory in their character. Some of them were eucharistic, and others were mere incidental purifications of persons or things. All that is requisite to our argument is, to show that there were some sacrifices which were expiatory and typical. Nor is it necessary to show that their expiatory character related to the law in every sense of the word; to show that it related to it in either the *political*, *ceremonial*, or *moral* sense, will be all that is required. To accomplish this, we think, will not be difficult.

To bring forward all the passages properly bearing upon this subject, would be unnecessarily tedious; we shall therefore only select a few.

First; we refer to the yearly feast of expiation, Lev. xvi. 30, 34. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from *all your sins* before the Lord. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for *all their sins*, once a year."

Now, let it be remembered, that death, according to the law, is the penalty of sin, and that an atonement is here made, by the offering of slain victims, for all the sins of the people, and the inference is plain, that, through the death of the animals, the people were saved from death, which was the penalty incurred by their sins; consequently, the death of the victims was vicarious,—in the stead of the death of the people; and also expiatory,—it removed, ceremonially, their sins from them.

That this atonement was a substitution of the life of the victim for that of the sinner, may further be seen from Lev. xv. 31. "Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they *die not in their uncleanness*."

Again; the ceremony in reference to the scape-goat, on the solemn anniversary of expiation, is peculiarly expressive of the transfer or removal of the sins of the people. The priest was to "put his hands on the head of the goat and confess over him *all the iniquities* of the children of Israel, and *all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat*;" and then he was to "*send the goat away by a fit man into the wilderness*." If this ceremony was not indicative of an expiation or removal of sin, it will be difficult to perceive in it any meaning whatever.

The celebrated feast of the Passover, instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites, when the angel smote the first-born of Egypt, clearly shows that the life of the sinner was preserved by the death of the victim. The lamb was slain, and its blood sprinkled upon the posts of the doors; and wherever the blood was sprinkled, the destroying angel passed over, and spared the lives of all within the

house. Thus, by the blood of the slain lamb, was the *life* of the Israelite preserved.

In the last place, upon this subject, we come to notice the language of the New Testament, in reference to the connection between the sacrifices of the law and the offering of himself by Christ as the great sacrifice for sin. So full and pointed is the comment of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is difficult to conceive how any one can read that epistle, and not be convinced that the Mosaic sacrifices were typical of the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ.

Heb. vii. 27. "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to *offer up sacrifice*, first for his *own sins*, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when *he offered up himself*." Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the *blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit *offered himself* without spot to God, *purge your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 22—23. "And almost all things are by the law *purged with blood*; and *without shedding of blood is no remission*. It was, therefore, necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should *offer himself* often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with *blood of others*; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. So Christ was *once offered to bear the sins of many*." Heb. x. 10. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the *offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*." Ch. x. 12. "But this man, after he had *offered one sacrifice for sins*, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Ch. x. 14. "For by *one offering* he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

In the passages above quoted, the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ, as typified by the sacrifices under the Mosaic law, is so clearly shown, that, if we deny this doctrine, we may despair of ever finding a consistent meaning to these Scriptures.

As corroborative testimony upon the subject before us, it may not be amiss to refer to the sacrifices of heathen nations. From what has already been said in reference to the origin of animal sacrifices, it will follow, that, however much the institution has been perverted, the heathen nations have all derived their first notions upon this subject from revelation, transmitted through tradition. History testifies that scarce a nation has been known, either in ancient or modern times, but what was

in the practice of offering sacrifices for the purpose of propitiating the Deity. Many of them went so far as, on occasions of great emergency, to offer up human victims. This was the case with the Phenicians, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Carthaginians, and also the learned Greeks and the civilized Romans; hence Cæsar, in his commentaries, states it as the doctrine of the Druids, that "unless the life of man were given for the life of men, the immortal gods would not be appeased." Dr. Priestley has denied that heathen nations pretended to expiate sin by animal sacrifice; but he has met with a pointed rebuke from Dr. Magee, who directly charges him either with culpable ignorance or unfairness. Nor is he more leniently treated in the hands of Dr. Dick, in his "Lectures," who says, "Either Dr. Priestley, who has made the strange assertion which I am now considering, had never read the history of the various nations of the human race, and in this case was guilty of presumption and dishonesty in pronouncing positively concerning their tenets; or, he has published to the world, with a view to support his own system, what he must have known to be utterly false. It would disgrace a schoolboy to say that the heathens knew nothing of expiatory sacrifices."

The argument for the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ, based upon the system of sacrifice, though not the main dependence of the advocates for the true doctrine of the atonement, must be seen, we think, from what has been said, to possess considerable force. Let it be remembered, that the patriarchal and Mosaic sacrifices were of Divine appointment; let the circumstances connected with the offerings of Abel, of Noah, of Abraham, and of Job, be well considered; let the institution of the Passover, and all the sacrifices under the law, be contemplated, together with the duties of the divinely constituted priesthood of the Jews; let the peculiar offerings of the heathens be taken into consideration; and then let the declarations of the New Testament, especially of the Epistle to the Hebrews, be consulted, and the manner in which sacrificial terms are applied to the death of Christ;—and we think that the conviction must force itself upon the mind of the unprejudiced, that, unless the whole system of patriarchal and Mosaic sacrifices was unmeaning mummery, and the writers of the New Testament designed to mislead their readers, the death of Christ upon the cross was a properly vicarious offering, in the room and stead of sinners, as an expiation for their sins.

The denial of this proposition would at once mar the beautiful symmetry which pervades the entire system of revelation, and render perfectly unmeaning, or force a far-fetched and unnatural construction upon, the institutions and a great portion of the word of God. Its

admission beautifully and harmoniously connects the law and the gospel, the old and the new dispensations, and stamps the entire code of revelation with the sacred impress of consistency and truth.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what light has the Christian doctrine of atonement generally been presented by infidels?</p> <p>2. What is the grand and leading proposition expressive of the true doctrine of the atonement proposed to be established?</p> <p>3. What are the Socinian and Arian hypotheses on this subject?</p> <p>4. What do we understand by the phrase, <i>meritorious and procuring cause of salvation</i>?</p> <p>5. How may it be shown that the promise concerning "the seed of the woman" contained an intimation of this doctrine?</p> <p>6. What was the origin of the patriarchal sacrifices?</p> <p>7. How is this proved?</p> <p>8. What is the evidence from the sacrifice of Abel?</p> <p>9. Of Noah?</p> <p>10. Of Abraham?</p> <p>11. Of Job?</p> <p>12. What is the grand objection to the Divine origin of sacrifices?</p> <p>13. How is it answered?</p> | <p>14. What is necessary to be proved, in order that the argument for the atonement, from the Mosaic sacrifices, may be conclusive?</p> <p>15. What are the three distinct parts of which the Mosaic law consisted?</p> <p>16. What is meant by each?</p> <p>17. What is the distinction between a <i>moral</i> and a <i>ceremonial</i> expiation?</p> <p>18. What is the evidence that St. Paul made this distinction?</p> <p>19. Is it contended that all the sacrifices of the law were expiatory?</p> <p>20. What is the Scripture proof in reference to the yearly expiation?</p> <p>21. In reference to the scape-goat?</p> <p>22. In reference to the Passover?</p> <p>23. What are the allusions from the New Testament?</p> <p>24. What is the probable origin of heathen sacrifices?</p> <p>25. What is the proof from them?</p> <p>26. Has the peculiar character of heathen sacrifices been denied?</p> <p>27. What has been replied?</p> <p>28. How is the argument summed up?</p> |
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LECTURE XIII.

THE ATONEMENT. — ITS NATURE.

IN the preceding lecture, the proper nature of the atonement has been argued from the typical institution of the sacrifices of the Old Testament ; but, as has already been intimated, clear and conclusive as the evidence from that source may be, it is not the principal reliance of the advocates for the true doctrine of the atonement.

As the first dawn of morning light is succeeded by an increasing brilliancy, till the earth is illumed by the full glories of mid-day, even so the great doctrine of redemption through the blood of the everlasting covenant, which at first faintly gleamed from the illustrious promise of “the seed of the woman,” continued to shine, with still increasing lustre, through the consecrated medium of the types and shadows, the smoking altars, and bleeding victims of the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations ; till, at length, under the superior light and more glorious developments of gospel day, we behold the clear fulfilment of ancient prediction, the infallible comment upon the divinely instituted types, and the most explicit revelation of the great mystery of salvation, through the merits of the vicarious and piacular oblation of God’s Messiah.

For a correct view of the doctrine of the atonement, we are not left to reason from ancient prediction and Jewish types alone, but we are furnished with an abundance of the plainest and most direct testimony. Let the true point of controversy be now borne in mind. That Christ died for us in such sense as to confer benefit upon us, Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, &c., admit ; but the doctrine for which we contend is, 1. That he died *for us*, as a proper *substitute* ; — in our *room and stead*. 2. That his death was *propitiatory* ; — a proper *expiation* or *atonement* for our sins. These are the points which are strenuously denied, especially by those who also deny the proper Divinity of Christ ; but, that they are expressly taught in the Scriptures, we shall now endeavor to show.

I. Now, the first point is to show that Christ died *for us*, as a proper *substitute*.

Our first argument is founded upon those passages in which Christ is expressly declared to have died *for us*. That the preposition *ὑπερ*, translated *for*, sometimes merely signifies *on account of*, or *for the advantage*

of, is admitted ; but that it also implies *instead of*, and that such is its meaning, as applied to the subject in hand, in the Scriptures, is what we shall endeavor to prove.

That it is so used by the Grecian classics, cannot be disputed. Raphelius, in his "Annotations," affirms, that, "The Socinians will not find one Greek writer to support a different interpretation." One or two quotations are all we shall adduce. "Would you be willing *ὑπὲρ τοῦτον ἀποθάνειν*," *to die for this boy?* That is, would you be willing to die *in his stead?* — to save his life by the sacrifice of your own? Again; *Ἀντιλόχος τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπερποθάνων*, — "*Antilochus, dying for his father*," obtained such glory that he alone among the Greeks was called *Φιλοπαῖτος*. The context in these passages admits of no other construction than that of a proper *substitution*. (See Zenophon De Cyri Exped. et De Venat.)

But, that such is the sense of the preposition in the New Testament, may be seen from John xi. 50. Caiaphas said, "It is expedient for us that one man *ἀποθῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ*, should die *for* the people, and that the whole nation perish not." The meaning evidently here is, that the life of Christ should be taken to save the lives of the nation from the vengeance of the Romans. Rom. v. 7. "For scarcely *ὑπὲρ*, *for* a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure *ὑπὲρ*, *for* a good man some would even dare to die." Here, the sense is plainly that of substitution; — the life of one man for that of another. But see the next verse: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανε*, Christ died *for us*." Now, if *ὑπὲρ*, in the preceding verse, meant a plain substitution of life for life, it must, in all fairness of criticism, mean the same here, for it is a continuation of the same argument. 2 Cor. v. 21. "For he hath made him *to be sin ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, *for us*, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here, the sense evidently is, that Christ was made a sin-offering, as a *substitute for us*. In no other sense can it be said that he "was made *sin*." The word *ἁμαρτία*, here rendered *sin*, is by Macknight and others translated *sin-offering*. So it is frequently used in the Septuagint. So also it is used in Heb. ix. 28. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, without a *sin-offering*, unto salvation." The scope of the apostle's argument will admit of no other interpretation. So also it is used in Heb. xiii. 11. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for *ἁμαρτίας*, a *sin-offering*." Now, it is clear, that the blood of beasts was offered "for sin" in no other sense than that of an expiation or atonement. Hence we perceive that Christ was "made sin for us" in no other sense than that of a vicarious offer-

ing. 1 Pet. iii. 18. "For Christ also hath once suffered *for sins*, the just *ὑπὲρ*, *for*, or *instead of*, the unjust." Rom. v. 6. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died *ὑπὲρ*, (*instead of*, or) *for* the ungodly." 2 Cor. v. 15. "And that he died *ὑπὲρ*, *for*, (or instead of,) all." Heb. ii. 9. "That he by the grace of God should taste death *ὑπὲρ*, *for*, (or instead of,) every man." 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Who gave himself a ransom *ὑπὲρ πάντων*, *for*, (or instead of,) *all*."

Again; from the use of the Greek preposition *ἀντὶ*, we may also infer that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious. That this preposition implies commutation and substitution, we may see from Matt. v. 38. "An eye *ἀντὶ*, *for*, (or *instead of*,) an eye, and a tooth *ἀντὶ*, *for*, (or *instead of*,) a tooth." Also, see Matt. ii. 22. "Archelaus did reign in Judea *ἀντὶ*, *in the room of* his father Herod." Now let us see how this same preposition is used in reference to our Lord. Matt. xx. 28. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom *ἀντὶ*, *for*, (or instead of,) many."

If the above quotations do not prove that Christ died as a substitute for us, we may confidently affirm that they prove nothing.

In the next place, to prove that the death of Christ was both vicarious and propitiatory, we appeal to those passages which speak of his *dying for our sins*.

Isa. liii. 4—6. "Surely he hath *borne our griefs*, and *carried our sorrows*; yet we did esteem him *stricken, smitten of God*, and *afflicted*. But he was wounded for *our transgressions*, he was bruised for *our iniquities*; the chastisement of *our peace* was *upon him*; and with *his stripes we are healed*. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord *hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*." Verses 10 and 11. "Yet it pleased the Lord to *bruise him*; he *hath put him to grief*: when thou shalt make his soul *an offering for sin*, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he *shall bear their iniquities*."

The passage just quoted is as plain and pointed as language will admit. Had the prophet written for the express purpose of vindicating the doctrine of atonement from the Socinian perversion, we do not see how he could have more strongly presented the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ. Observe, here, our Lord is said to have "*borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*;" our iniquity is said to have been "*laid on him*;" and he is said to "*bear the iniquities of many*."

In all this, there is doubtless an allusion to the ceremony in reference

to the scape-goat, upon which the priest laid his hands, and confessed over it the sins of the people, and then sent it away into the wilderness ; but there is evidently more implied here than the bare removal of sin. This is implied, but the most emphatic meaning of the language is the bearing of the punishment due to sin. That this is the meaning of the phrase “to bear sin or iniquity,” in the Scriptures, may be seen from Lev. xxii. 9. “They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they *bear sin* for it, and *die* therefore, if they profane it.” Here, to bear sin was to be exposed to death, the penalty of sin. See, also, Eze. xviii. 20. “The soul that *sinneth*, it shall *die*. The son shall not *bear* (die for) the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father *bear* (die for) the iniquity of the son.”

Thus it will appear, that, by our Saviour bearing our iniquities, as seen in the passage from Isaiah, we are plainly taught that he bore the punishment due to us on account of our iniquities ; consequently, his sufferings were vicarious and expiatory. Again ; it is said, “he was *stricken, smitten of God, wounded, bruised, chastised* ; it pleased the Lord to *bruise him*,” &c. Language cannot more plainly declare that the sufferings of Christ were a penal infliction for our sins. Again ; by his sufferings we here learn that we procure “peace,” “we are healed,” we are “justified ;” all of which testify that his death was properly propitiatory. There is an allusion to this passage in Isaiah in 1 Pet. ii. 24. “Who his own self *bare our sins* in his own body on the tree, that we, being *dead to sins*, should live unto *righteousness* ; by whose *stripes* ye *were healed*.” Here, the expiatory character of the death of Christ is clear from the effects resulting from it. By it we are said to be “dead to sins,” “alive unto righteousness,” and to be “healed.”

In Gal. iii. 13, we read, “Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being made a *curse for us* ; for it is written, *Cursed* is every one that hangeth on a tree.” The law had said, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” Consequently, as “*all* had sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” *all* were exposed to this curse ; therefore, as Christ, in this sense, became a curse for us, he must have suffered in our room, on account of our sins.

Rom. iv. 25. “Who was delivered *for our offences*.” Here, our offences are presented as the antecedent cause of the sufferings of Christ ; consequently, they were expiated by his death.

Next, we would refer to some of those passages which speak of *reconciliation, propitiation, &c.*, as connected with the sufferings of Christ. 1 John ii. 2. “And he is the *propitiation for our sins* ; and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.” Col. i. 20. “And

having made *peace* through the *blood of his cross*, by him to *reconcile* all things unto himself." Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation*, through faith in *his blood*, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. v. 11. "By whom we have now received the *καταλλαγήν*, *atonement*," (or *reconciliation*.)

The amount of these passages is equivalent to what is implied in being "saved from wrath through him;" that is, delivered from exposure to the penalty of his punitive justice. Again; we would notice some of those passages in which the salvation of the gospel is spoken of under the appellation of *redemption*. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "Ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious *blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have *redemption through his blood*." The Greek words, *λυτρωσις*, *ἀπολυτρώσις*, properly imply the liberation of a captive by the payment of a *ransom*, or some consideration, without which he could not have been liberated; therefore, we are here taught that the death of Christ is the procuring cause of salvation.

Lastly, we would notice that *justification*, or *the remission of sin*, and *sanctification*, are said to be connected with the death of Christ. Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*; and by him all that believe are *justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*." 1 John i. 7. "The *blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*." Rev. i. 5. "Unto him that loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*." Matt. xxvi. 28. "For this is *my blood* of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the *remission of sins*." Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*." Rom. v. 9. "Much more then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

The evidence from Scripture for the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ might be extended much further, but we deem it unnecessary. If persons are disposed to abide by the express declarations of Scripture, what has already been adduced is sufficient; but if they are determined, at all hazards, to spurn the Bible doctrine of the atonement, they may, if they choose, form a creed to suit their own notions, and enjoy the luxury of fancying that it is the "perfection of beauty," however adverse it may be to the teachings of revelation. We think we may safely say, that, had the inspired writers designed expressly to teach the vicarious and propitiatory character of the death

of Christ, the passages we have adduced are admirably adapted to the accomplishment of that purpose; but had they designed to teach an opposite doctrine, it will be a difficult task to vindicate them from such a degree of ignorance of language, or disingenuousness of purpose, as would utterly discredit their claims to inspiration.

Having now established, from the Scriptures, the grand and leading principles of the atonement, as predicated upon the vicarious and expiatory character of the death of Christ, as the meritorious and procuring cause of salvation, we proceed, next, to illustrate more particularly the reasonableness and propriety of the whole scheme, and to vindicate it from some of the principal objections with which it has been assailed.

From what has already been said in reference to the necessity for the atonement, as originating in the principles of the Divine administration, it will necessarily follow, that, after man had violated the law of God, there was but one possible way in which the threatened penalty could, in any degree, be averted or removed, and guilty man rescued from the opening jaws of impending ruin. And we now inquire, What was that way of escape? — What was the only door of hope to a ruined world? We answer, it was that something different from the precise penalty should be substituted, which would answer, as fully as the threatened penalty itself, all the legitimate purposes of the Divine government. Now if it can be shown that the sufferings of Christ, in our room and stead, meet this requirement, and perfectly secure all the ends of the Divine administration, the propriety of the great scheme of atonement which we have presented will at once be manifest; and the plan will be opened up to our view “by which God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

That the point now proposed may be clearly presented, it will be necessary for us to inquire what are the grand purposes of the Divine government? These are,

1. To show God's hatred to sin, arising from the holiness of his nature. This is essential, in order that his holy and excellent character may be known and revered by his intelligent creatures. For if their happiness be connected with their duty, and their paramount duty be love to God, it is plain that they cannot be led to the exercise of that love unless his character be presented to them in its native excellence and purity, as it was proclaimed unto Moses. “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will *by no means clear the guilty.*”

2. Another end of the Divine government is, to show God's determination to punish the sinner. This is essential, that he may maintain

dominion over the intelligent creation, and prevent general anarchy and rebellion, and consequent destruction, throughout all parts of the moral universe. If the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," at the birth of creation, may we not reasonably suppose that they were spectators of the fall of man? And what, we ask, would have been the effect upon perhaps millions of worlds, had the Almighty failed to require the penalty of the violated law? Would they not all have received license to sin with impunity? And would not the result probably have been fatal to the inhabitants of innumerable worlds? Therefore we conclude that the mercy of God, much more his justice, demanded satisfaction for a broken law, that the Divine determination to punish sin might be strikingly exhibited for the safety and happiness of myriads of intelligent and accountable creatures, formed for happiness in communion with God.

Thus it appears to us that the two particulars above presented exhibit the grand ends of the Divine government. Now if it can be made to appear that the sufferings and death of Christ, as a substitute, will subserve these purposes, as fully as the exact penalty threatened in its precise kind and degree, then it will follow, that, by this arrangement, the honor of the Divine throne may be sustained, the demands of justice satisfied, and yet mercy be extended to a fallen world. All this, we conceive, is fully accomplished in the Divine plan and arrangement, as set forth through the merits of the crucified Emmanuel.

That such is the fact, will more fully appear by the examination of several particulars.

1. Consider *the exalted character of Christ*. Here, we must view him as Mediator; — as God-man, possessing all excellency and perfection; as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." But we must also contemplate him in the endearing relation of the *Son*; — the *only* Son; — the *well-beloved* Son of God. For the Almighty to let fall his wrath upon a character so exalted, and so dearly beloved, rather than to violate the claims of justice, or give countenance to sin, surely is a far more illustrious exhibition of the holiness of his character, and his settled purpose not to clear the guilty at the sacrifice of correct principle, than could have been presented by the eternal punishment of the whole human family.

2. Notice *the freeness with which Christ was delivered up by the Father, and with which he consented to suffer for us*. Man had no claims upon God. God was under no obligations to man. All was free, unmerited mercy and compassion. God saw and pitied us, and ran to our relief. The Saviour voluntarily laid down his life. Surely these facts enhance the value of the sacrifice, and tend gloriously to

exhibit the extent of the love, the holiness of the nature, and the sacredness of the justice of God.

3. Next, notice *the nature and extent of the sufferings of Christ*. We do not pretend to say that he suffered, either in *kind* or *degree*, precisely the same that man would be required to suffer, if deprived of the benefits of redemption. Far from it, indeed. The very idea is monstrous and absurd.

He could not suffer the same *kind* of torment. One of the principal ingredients in the cup which the miserably damned are to drink, is the bitterness of remorse. This the Saviour could not taste.

Neither do we believe that he suffered to the same *extent* that man would have been required to suffer, had no atonement been provided. We cannot believe it; in the first place, because there is no intimation of the kind in the Bible; and, in the second place, because we think it unnecessary, unreasonable, and absurd. It was unnecessary, because of the superior merits of Christ. The value and efficacy of his atonement result mainly, not from the *intensity of his sufferings*, but the *dignity of his character*. It was the humanity, and not the Divinity, which suffered. The humanity was the sacrifice, but the Divinity was the altar on which it was offered, and by which the gift was sanctified. The sufferings were finite in their extent, but the sacrifice was of infinite value, by reason of the mysterious hypostatic union with the Divinity.

Again; the hypothesis is unreasonable and absurd, because it would mar the glorious exhibition of Divine love in redemption. For if the full and exact penalty due to man, in kind and degree, was endured by the Saviour, where is the manifestation of the Father's benevolence? Redemption, upon this supposition, would not be a scheme of grace, so far as the Father is concerned; but merely a transfer of misery to a different object,—from the *guilty* to the *innocent*. But, furthermore, an *endless degree* of punishment was due to man; consequently, this punishment was infinite at least in duration. But the sufferings of Christ, as they were not infinite in duration, so neither could they have been infinite in extent; otherwise, they never could have terminated. Infinite means *without limit*. But his sufferings were limited,—they came to an end; consequently, they could not have been infinite. Had they continued even an hour longer than they did, with their greatest intensity, it is evident they would have been greater, in the aggregate, than they were; therefore, they were not infinite in extent. All the infinitude connected with them is applicable to the dignity of the sufferer, and not to the intensity of the agony.

And if it be objected, that the atonement cannot be satisfactory to

justice unless it equal the original penalty in the extent of suffering, we reply, that the same argument would prove that it must also correspond with the original penalty in the kind, as well as the degree, of misery ; which we have seen to be impossible. All that is necessary is, that the sufferings be such as justice can accept as an adequate satisfaction, in the character of a substitute, for the original penalty. All that may be lacking in the extent of the suffering is amply made up in the superior, yea, the infinite dignity of the sufferer. But, after all, we freely admit that the agony of our blessed Lord was great, beyond the power of language to describe, or of mere man to endure. "It pleased the Father to bruise him;" and he bore the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.

On the subject now under consideration, the following observations of a learned divine are appropriate and satisfactory :—

"But how, it may be asked again, could the sufferings of Jesus Christ satisfy for the sins of 'a great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues?' The common answer is, that the transcendent value of his sufferings was the consequence of the dignity of his nature, and it seems to be sufficient. His sufferings were limited in degree, because the nature in which he endured them was finite ; but their merit was infinite, because the suffering nature was united to the Son of God, (the Divinity.) An idea, however, seems to prevail, that his sufferings were the same in degree with those to which his people (all mankind) were liable ; that he suffered not only in their room, but that quantum of pain and sorrow which, if he had not interposed, they should have suffered in their own persons through eternity ; and so far has this notion been carried by some, that they have maintained that his sufferings would have been greater or less if there had been one more or one fewer to be redeemed. According to this system, the value of his sufferings arose, not from the dignity of his person, but from his power. The use of his Divine person in this case was, not to enhance the merit of his sufferings, but to strengthen him to bear them. If this is true, it was not necessary that he should have taken human nature into personal union with himself ; it was only necessary that he should have sustained it ; and this he could have done, although it had subsisted by itself. That the sufferings of the man Christ Jesus were greater than those which a mere mortal could have borne, will be readily granted ; but, although it does not become us to set limits to Omnipotence, yet we cannot conceive him, I think, considered simply as a man, to have sustained the whole load of Divine vengeance, which would have overwhelmed countless myriads of men through an everlasting duration. By its union to himself, his

human nature did not become infinite in power; it was not even endowed with the properties of an angel, but continued the same *essentially* with human nature in all other men.”—(Dick’s Theology.)

Those who imagine that Christ endured all the pain which “the millions of the redeemed were doomed to endure throughout the whole of their being,” have taken an improper view of the whole subject. They have considered “our sins to be debts in a literal sense, and the sufferings of Christ to be such a payment as a surety makes in pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings.”

Those who have represented “that one drop of the blood of Christ would have been sufficient to redeem the world,” have erred on the opposite extreme. According to this, it might well be asked why he shed so many drops as he did? or why he “poured out his soul unto death?” Therefore, while we admit that the sufferings of Christ were inconceivably great, we cannot believe that they were infinite in degree. Their transcendent value resulted from the union of the Divine with the human nature.

From what has been said, we think it must appear, that, through the sufferings and death of Christ in our room and stead, although something different is accepted, instead of the exact penalty originally denounced, yet herein the ends of the Divine government are fully answered, the holiness of God is exhibited, the claims of justice satisfied, and thus “mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;” and a new and living way is opened up for the extension of mercy to fallen man. All difficulties being removed,—the law being “magnified and made honorable,”—God can stoop to fallen man with offers of pardon, and the throne of justice stands secure.

We conclude the present lecture by noticing a few of the prominent objections which have been urged against the view here taken of the atonement.

1. It has been said “that it is derogatory to the Divine character to suppose that God was angry with the human family, and could only be induced to love them by the death of his own Son.”

To this we reply, that the doctrine of the atonement sets forth no such idea. It is true the Divine justice demanded satisfaction, or the punishment of the criminal; and this fixed principle of the Divine administration, to punish the guilty, is, in Scripture, denominated the *anger*, or *indignation*, of God; but no intelligent divine ever taught or believed that the Almighty is liable to be perturbed by the rage of that passion, in the sense in which it exists with men. This is so far from being true, that “God loved the world,” with “the love of pity” or

compassion, perhaps, quite as much before the atonement was made as after it; yea, it was his love that induced him to send his Son to die for us; and, therefore, it is plain that this objection is founded upon a false assumption.

2. It has been objected, "that it is contrary to justice to punish the innocent for the guilty."

To this we reply, that if the innocent sufferer undertakes voluntarily, in view of a rich reward which is to follow and a greater good which is to result, there is nothing in it contrary to strict justice, as recognized in the practice of the wisest and best of our race in all ages. The objection now under consideration must come with a bad grace from believers in the truth of revelation; for if it be unjust for the innocent to be punished in the room of the guilty, it must be unjust for the innocent to be punished under any circumstances. The ground of the injustice, if there be any, is not that the innocent is punished *for the guilty*, but that he is *punished at all*. Now, if we believe in the truth of revelation, we are compelled to admit, 1. That Christ was *perfectly innocent*; — "he did no sin." 2. That he *was punished*; — "it pleased the Father to bruise him." These are facts which we must discard our Bible before we can dispute. The only question, then, for us to determine, is, whether it comports more with the principles of strict justice, the purity of the Divine administration, and the general tenor of Scripture, to say that the innocent Saviour was punished with the most excruciating pangs for no good cause, — for no assignable reason whatever, — or, to contend, as we have done, that his sufferings were voluntarily entered upon, in the room and stead of a guilty world of sinners, who had incurred the penalty of a violated law, from which they could only be released by the admission of a substitute. That the former position is far more objectionable than the latter, we think cannot be disputed. If we admit the former, we assume a ground in direct opposition to the plainest principles of justice, as recognized by all enlightened governments upon earth, and as set forth in the Holy Scriptures; if we admit the latter, we are sustained by the theory and practice of the wisest and best of mankind, as well as the plain teachings of Holy Writ. Therefore, the objection may be dismissed, as deserving no further reply.

3. It has been objected, that the view we have taken of the atonement is "contrary to the admitted facts, that all men suffer, more or less, the penalty of the violated law in this life, and that some will still continue to suffer it in a future state."

Now, it is contended by the objector, that if Christ suffered this penalty in our room and stead, all for whom he suffered should be immediately

and forever released therefrom; otherwise, a double payment of the claims of justice is exacted, which would be unreasonable, and derogatory to the Divine administration. The objection here presented lies with full force against the view taken of the atonement by the Antinomians and many of the Calvinists, but it can have no application to that view of the subject which we have presented, and which we believe to be the scriptural account.

Upon the supposition that Christ discharged the exact penalty of the law due from man, in the sense in which a surety would liquidate the debt of an insolvent individual, by the payment of the full demand in dollars and cents, it would most certainly follow that the debtor would be at once and forever discharged from all obligations to the creditor, and justice would require that all for whom the atonement was made should have immediate and complete deliverance from the penalty of the law which they had incurred. But such is far from being the true presentation of the subject. The very idea of a substitute implies that something different from the exact penalty is admitted in its place. And, here, it must also be confessed, that, in the admission of Christ as a substitute, there is a relaxation of the rigor of law; for the Almighty was under no obligations to admit any compromise or commutation whatever, and, in strict justice, might have rejected every substitute, and enforced with rigor the threatened penalty, to the last jot and tittle. But, at the same time, be it remembered, that the admitted relaxation of law was such as was perfectly consistent with justice, such as was calculated to sustain the honor of the Divine throne, and such as God might, consistently with his character, admit.

Now, if it be admitted that God was at liberty either to accept or reject the substitute, it will follow that he was at liberty to prescribe the terms on which the substitute should be accepted. And, as God was under no obligations to accept a substitute at all, so he was under no obligations to extend mercy to the sinner through the substitute. And as the efficacy of the substitute, as such, is based entirely on the will and appointment of God, even so the blessing of pardon and salvation through him is based entirely on the unmerited mercy and free grace of God, who has condescended freely to bring himself under obligations, by his own voluntary promise, to extend mercy to man through the Mediator. Hence it will follow, that as the admission of the substitute, and the promise of mercy through him, were acts of pure favor and free grace on the part of God; so, also, it must be the prerogative of God to fix, by his own will and appointment, not only the degree of suffering to be endured by the substitute, in order that the law may be "magnified and made honorable," and salvation be made possible to man, but also the

condition upon which, and the plan according to which, pardon and salvation are to be extended.

Therefore, it is clear, that the atonement of Christ, taken in the abstract, does not bring God under obligation to extend pardon and salvation, absolutely and unconditionally, to any. The obligations of God to pardon and save the sinner, upon any terms, result not necessarily from the atonement, as such, but from the gracious promise which God has been pleased freely to make. Now it will follow, that, as God has not been pleased to promise that all for whom the atonement was made shall be immediately and unconditionally pardoned and released from the penalty of the law, there is no ground for cavil against the doctrine of atonement because all men in the present life suffer to some extent, and some in a future state shall suffer to the full extent, the penalty of the law.

Thus it is clear that the objection to the view taken of the atonement, from the admitted fact that all for whom it was made are not at once and forever released from the penalty of the law, falls to the ground.

The great truth is, that salvation through the atonement is not a system either of prevention or of absolute and immediate deliverance, but of deliverance according to a prescribed plan, which the Scriptures sufficiently unfold.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is admitted in reference to the death of Christ, by Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, &c. ?</p> <p>2. What are the points in dispute contended for in the lecture ?</p> <p>3. What is the first argument presented to prove that Christ died <i>as a substitute</i> ?</p> <p>4. What are the Scriptures adduced ?</p> <p>5. What is the proof from the use of the Greek preposition <i>anti</i> ?</p> <p>6. What is the first class of texts appealed to to prove that the death of Christ was both <i>vicarious</i> and <i>expiatory</i> ?</p> <p>7. What are the Scriptures adduced ?</p> <p>8. What passages speak of reconciliation, propitiation, &c., as connected with the death of Christ ?</p> <p>9. What passages speak of salvation under the appellation of <i>redemption</i> ?</p> <p>10. What passages connect justification, remission, sanctification, &c., with the death of Christ ?</p> <p>11. After man had sinned, what was the only</p> | <p>way by which he could be released from the penalty ?</p> <p>12. How can it be shown that the sufferings of Christ in our room and stead meet the ends of Divine government ?</p> <p>13. What were these ends ?</p> <p>14. What is said in reference to the exalted character of Christ ?</p> <p>15. In reference to the freeness with which he suffered ?</p> <p>16. In reference to the nature and extent of his sufferings ?</p> <p>17. What is the first objection mentioned to the view taken of the atonement ?</p> <p>18. How is it answered ?</p> <p>19. What is the second, and how is it answered ?</p> <p>20. What is the third, and how is it answered ?</p> <p>21. Is God under obligations to save the sinner on any terms ?</p> <p>22. Whence do those obligations originate ?</p> <p>23. Is salvation through the atonement a system of prevention ?</p> |
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LECTURE XIV.

THE ATONEMENT.—ITS EXTENT.

A CONSIDERATION of the EXTENT of the atonement, or an examination of the question, *for whom are the benefits of the death of Christ designed?* opens to our view one of the most interesting and important subjects connected with Christian theology.

From a very early period, upon this subject, the church has been much divided in sentiment; and from the days of Calvin and Arminius to the present time, the great contending parties, in reference to the subject now before us, have been designated as Calvinists and Arminians.

Without, in this place, entering into consideration of the origin and history of the controversy here referred to, suffice it to say, that the two great and learned men above named so systematized and arranged the peculiar views for which they contended, in reference to the extent of the atonement, and so impressed them with the indelible marks of their comprehensive and gigantic minds, that posterity, by common consent, have hitherto connected, and perhaps will still continue to connect, the names of Calvin and Arminius with the peculiar systems of doctrine for which they respectively contended.

When we reflect on the great number, extensive erudition, and eminent piety of the divines who have been enrolled on either side in this controversy, we are at once admonished of the propriety of caution and calmness in the investigation of this subject, and of respectful forbearance of feeling toward those with whom we differ in judgment. Yet, at the same time, as this is a subject upon which the Bible is by no means silent, and which must be decided by that book alone, and as it is made the duty of all to “search the Scriptures” for themselves, we may venture, in the fear of God, impartially to examine for ourselves, and to bring the points at issue to the test of reason and Scripture.

To enter minutely into the consideration of all the shades of difference in the sentiments, and technicalities of the arguments, which have been presented, by such as have been denominated Calvinists or Arminians, would be an interminable task. Upon no subject in divinity has controversy been more voluminous; and it is to be lamented that it has

seldom been more virulent than frequently it has been in the discussion under consideration.

*Before we enter particularly into the merits of the main question between Calvinists and Arminians, it may be proper briefly to advert to some of the views entertained by some who have properly belonged to neither of the two great divisions of Christians above named.

With regard to Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, &c., it may here be observed, that, as they deny the proper Divinity of Christ, without which he would be incapable of making an atonement, so they deny the native depravity of man, without which the atonement would not be necessary ; and, in perfect consistency with these principles, they also deny the reality of the atonement itself, and, consequently, there is no place in their system for the application of its benefits.

There is, however, another scheme, that we will here briefly notice, which, while it admits the native depravity of man, and the reality of the atonement through Christ, yet, so far as the application of the benefits of the atonement is concerned, it is essentially different both from Calvinism and Arminianism. We refer to a certain class of Universalists, who have so construed the extent of the atonement as thereby to secure absolute and unconditional salvation to all mankind. As the general system of Universalism may be a subject of special consideration in another place, a very brief reply to the particular feature of that system above named is all that we here deem necessary. The scheme itself is evidently based upon an erroneous view of the whole matter. So to understand the atonement as thereby necessarily to secure the absolute and unconditional salvation of all mankind, would represent the work of redemption as a commercial transaction between the Father and the Son, by which the Son made a fair purchase of the human family, by paying down, on the cross of Calvary, an adequate price for the unconditional redemption of the whole world ; and that, consequently, justice can never have any claim upon any to punish them hereafter. It is true, as hereafter may be more fully seen, that many Calvinists take the same view of the atonement, only that they limit it to the elect portion of the human family, and, so far as *they* are concerned, secure, by the death of Christ, their absolute and unconditional salvation, while the rest of mankind are passed by, and left to perish in their sins, without the possibility of escape. But the whole scheme, whether adopted by Universalists or Calvinists, we conceive to be based upon a false and unscriptural assumption. The Scriptures nowhere represent the atonement in the light of a *commercial transaction*, but everywhere it is presented as a *governmental arrangement*. Were we to admit the premises, and take the view here presented of the nature of the atone-

ment, then it would inevitably follow that all for whom the atonement was made would necessarily be saved ; and the only controversy between Calvinists and Universalists would be, to determine whether the atonement was made for *all*, or only for *a part* ; as both parties would be compelled to admit that all for whom Christ died to atone would most assuredly be saved.

That this commercial, or credit and debtor, view of the subject, is erroneous and unscriptural, will be obvious, when we reflect that it tends directly to banish from the scheme of redemption the whole system of grace. If the Saviour has purchased, by the payment of an equivalent, the salvation absolute of all for whom he died, then it follows that the Father is under obligations, in strict justice, to save them ; consequently, their salvation, so far as God the Father is concerned, cannot be of mercy or grace, but of debt ; and the entire display of the Divine benevolence, in the eternal salvation of sinners, is reduced to a fiction.

The truth is, the atonement, of itself, brings the Almighty under no obligations to extend salvation to the world. It is true, that without the atonement none could be saved ; but *that* alone does not secure inevitably and necessarily the salvation of any. Salvation is emphatically of *grace*. The atonement removes the difficulties which stood in the way of man's salvation. These difficulties were, *a broken law*, and *the unsatisfied claims of Divine justice*. While these barriers were in the way, God could not, however much he might have been disposed, consistently with his nature, extend mercy to man. The removal of these impediments,—the magnifying of the broken law, and the satisfying of the demands of justice,—was the great work of the atonement. But the great difficulties, which, without the atonement, rendered it impossible for God to extend mercy to man, being by the atonement removed, it does not necessarily follow that God is under obligations to extend mercy to man ; it only follows that he *MAY*, if he *PLEASE*. And thus it appears, that salvation is all of the free, unmerited grace of God. The atonement, considered in the abstract, leaves the Almighty free either to extend or withhold pardoning mercy ; whereas, without the atonement, he was not free to extend mercy, but was bound to withhold it. All the obligations which God is under, even now, to save the sinner, flow not necessarily from the atonement, as a matter of debt, but from the gracious promise of God, which he has been pleased to make, through his mere mercy and benevolence. Hence we perceive that the idea that God is under obligations to save all men unconditionally, on account of the atonement of Christ, is so far from being correct, that he is, on that account, under no necessary obligations to save any.

And if the Almighty be free to extend or withhold mercy, according

to his good pleasure, it necessarily follows that he has a right to fix the conditions of salvation as he may please. And as he has promised salvation to those who repent and believe, and threatened destruction to those who refuse, it is clear that there is no hope for such as reject the conditions of salvation as presented in the gospel, but they must perish everlastingly; and as we have clearly shown, the Universalist delusion must perish with them.

We will proceed to the consideration of the extent of the atonement, in which is involved the great matter of controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. We shall not attempt to amplify the subject, so as particularly to examine everything which able divines have presented, either as illustration or argument, on either side. It shall be our main object to arrange and condense, so as to bring the essential point of inquiry to as narrow a compass as possible.

Notwithstanding Calvinists have differed with each other considerably in their manner of presenting this subject, yet we think this difference has generally consisted either in words, or in points not materially affecting the main question. There is *one great point*, upon which every Calvinistic author of note, so far as we have been able to ascertain, has differed from all genuine Arminians. In that great and leading point is concentrated the substance of the whole controversy; and upon its settlement depends the adjustment of all questions of any real importance connected with the subject. The point referred to is embraced in the following question:—DOES THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST SO EXTEND TO ALL MEN AS TO MAKE SALVATION POSSIBLE FOR THEM? By all genuine Calvinists, this question is answered in the negative; but by all genuine Arminians, it is answered in the affirmative.

Before we proceed directly to the discussion of the question here presented, we will notice several different views of the subject, taken by learned and eminent Calvinists, and show that they all perfectly harmonize when they come to the question above presented.

The following will be found to contain the substance of the principal Calvinistic theories upon this subject, viz.:—

1. That the atonement of Christ is specially limited, in its nature, design, and benefits, to the elect portion of mankind, so that Christ died for them alone; that he represented them alone in the covenant of redemption; and that “neither are any other redeemed by Christ;”

And that, consequently, none but the elect have any possible chance of salvation.

The foregoing is, no doubt, the strict Calvinistic view, as contained in the writings of Calvin himself, and set forth in the “Westminster Confession of Faith,” which is at once the standard of the Church of Scot-

land and of the English and American Presbyterians. Yet it must be admitted that even the abettors of this system acknowledge that all men, by virtue of the atonement of Christ, are favored with temporal mercies, and what they term a “common call” of the gospel, which, however, they contend, cannot possibly lead to, nor are they designed to eventuate in their eternal salvation.

2. A second scheme is, that the atonement of Christ possessed sufficient value in its nature to satisfy fully for all the sins of the whole world; but that it was not designed, nor can it possibly be extended in its application, so as to make salvation possible to any but the elect.

It will be readily perceived that this scheme is not essentially variant from the first. Indeed, it has been advocated by a goodly number of the most eminent divines of the strictly Calvinistic churches. The only point in which it might seem to differ from the first is, that it allows a sufficiency in the *nature* of the atonement to avail for the salvation of all; but that sufficiency in nature is completely neutralized by the declaration, that, according to the intent and purpose of God, the application cannot possibly be made to any but the elect. This system is what has sometimes been termed *general redemption*, with a *particular application*. But to call this a scheme of general redemption, is a palpable abuse of language; for if, according to the design and decree of God, it is absolutely impossible for any but the elect to obtain the benefits of the atonement, redemption, so far as the rest of mankind are concerned, is only in name, and amounts to a perfect nullity; so that there is no real difference between this and the first system.

3. A third system is, that the atonement was not only sufficient, but was also designed for the salvation of all mankind; and that the gospel should therefore be preached with sincerity alike to all; but that none but the elect can ever possibly be saved by it, because none others will believe and obey it; and that this is certain, because none can possibly believe unless God, by the invincible influence of his Spirit, give them faith, and this he has decreed from all eternity to withhold from all but the elect.

The substance of this system is this:—Christ has purchased a conditional salvation for all men. Faith is this condition; but, according to the decree and arrangement of God, this faith cannot possibly be obtained by any but the elect.

The above is substantially the scheme advocated by the pious Baxter; which he adopted from Camero, and introduced with the avowed purpose of steering a medium course between rigid Calvinism and Arminianism. It is, likewise, little different from the views advocated by Dr. Samuel Hopkins, and many other divines, of the last and the present century,

both in Europe and America. Calvinists of this class appear, to persons not well versed in the technicalities of their system, to exhibit the gospel call with as much unreserved fulness and freeness to all mankind as Arminians possibly can do. They offer salvation to all, urge all to repent and believe, and assure all that they have a sufficiency of grace to enable them to repent and believe, and that if they are not saved they will be condemned for their unbelief, and it will be their own fault. When their discourses are richly interlarded with such expressions as the above, it is not surprising that many should be unable to distinguish their doctrine from genuine Arminianism; but, although they, no doubt, think they can, consistently with their creed, express themselves as they do, and should therefore be exonerated from any intention to mislead, yet it is most evident that, when we allow their own explanation to be placed upon their language, so far from harmonizing in sentiment with genuine Arminians, they differ in nothing essentially from rigid Calvinists of the old school.

That we may understand correctly what they mean when they use such language as we have above quoted, it will be necessary for us to attend strictly to their own interpretation of the terms.

1. Then, when they offer salvation indiscriminately to all, they sometimes tell us that they are justified in doing so, because the elect, who only have the power, in the proper sense, and who *only* are really intended to embrace it, are so mixed up among the general mass of all nations to whom the gospel is sent, that none but God can determine who they are; therefore, the gospel call is general, and should be indiscriminately presented, that all for whose salvation it was really designed may embrace it, and that others may have the opportunity of wilfully rejecting it, which they will most certainly do, because God has determined to withhold from them that *faith* without which the gospel cannot be properly received.

2. When they urge all to repent and believe, they endeavor to justify themselves by alleging, that, although man has lost the power to obey, God has not lost the right to command; that it is still the duty of all men to repent and believe the gospel;—that salvation is sincerely offered to all upon these conditions;—and that, if they do not comply with the conditions, God is not to blame, for he is under obligations to confer saving faith upon none.

3. When they say that all have a sufficiency of grace to enable them to repent and believe, and consequently to be saved, we must look narrowly at their own interpretation of the term SUFFICIENCY. When they use this word, and kindred terms, such as POWER, ABILITY, &c., they do not attach to them their full import, according to their usual

acceptation in language, but by resorting to the subtleties of philological distinction, and applying to these terms several different meanings, they fix upon a certain sense in which they think they can be used in reference to the salvation of all men. This sense, although it may be different from the generally received import of the terms, we may reasonably suppose is always present with their minds when they use the terms as above specified. By the phrase "SUFFICIENT GRACE," as used by these divines, in reference to such as are not of the elect portion of mankind, we are not to understand invincible effectual grace, such as they affirm is given to the elect, but merely "sufficient ineffectual grace," as Baxter himself termed it. What he understood thereby is sufficiently evident from his own words, as follow :— "I say it again, confidently, all men that perish, (who have the use of reason,) do perish directly for rejecting sufficient recovering grace. By grace, I mean mercy contrary to merit. By recovering, I mean such as TENDETH in its own nature toward their recovery, and leadeth or helpeth them thereto. By sufficient, I mean, NOT SUFFICIENT DIRECTLY TO SAVE THEM, (for such none of the elect have till they are saved;) NOR YET SUFFICIENT TO GIVE THEM FAITH, OR CAUSE THEM SAVINGLY TO BELIEVE. But it is sufficient to bring them NEARER Christ than they are, though not to put them into immediate possession of Christ by union with him, as faith would do."— (Universal Redemption, p. 434.)

These words of Baxter may be considered a just comment on the language of all Calvinists, when they speak of a sufficiency of grace being given to all men. They mean a sufficiency to do them some good, "to bring them *nearer* Christ," and even a sufficiency to save them, if they would believe; but this they cannot do, because God withholds saving faith from them. It is difficult to understand the term "sufficient grace," as used above, to signify anything different from INSUFFICIENT GRACE. So far as the question of salvation is concerned, which is the only point of any importance herein involved, the term SUFFICIENT is entirely explained away, so as to be made a perfect nullity. And thus this system is left, notwithstanding it professes to give a sufficiency of grace to all mankind, in no essential point different from rigid Calvinism.

Again; Calvinists, when they speak of the ability of all men to believe and be saved, understand by the term *ability* something which falls very far short of the full import of the word, as commonly used. They resort to the subtlety of philosophy, and make a distinction between *moral* and *natural* ability. By the latter, they mean the physical powers necessary to the performance of any specific act. By the former, they mean the mental state, or condition of the will, necessary to the performance of any specific act. Therefore, when they say that all men may believe

and be saved, they only mean that they have the natural powers necessary to saving faith ; but that these natural powers must necessarily be unavailing in all except the elect, because they cannot be exerted without the moral ability ; and this none can possibly obtain, unless God see proper, by an invincible act of sovereign grace, to confer it ; but as he has decreed from all eternity to withhold this grace, by which alone the moral ability in question can be produced, from all except the elect, it necessarily follows, that, according to this view, the atonement of Christ has not rendered possible the salvation of any but the elect.

Again ; when Calvinists present the offer of salvation to all, and declare that God willeth not the damnation of any, in order to reconcile these terms, which seem to imply a real provision and possibility for the salvation of all, with the true principles of their creed, they resort to a distinction between what they term the *revealed* and *secret* will of God. It is, say they, according to the revealed will of God that all men should repent and believe, and consequently be saved ; but it is according to the secret will of God that none shall receive the grace to enable them to repent and believe, but the elect ; and consequently that salvation is, in the proper sense, possible to none others.

As a further illustration, and as an evidence that we have not here misinterpreted the true sentiments of Calvinists, we present the following quotation from a late Calvinistic author of great learning and eminence.

“ The Calvinists say that these counsels and commands, which are intended by God to produce their full effect only with regard to the elect, are addressed indifferently to all, for this reason,—because it was not revealed to the writers of the New Testament, nor is it now revealed to the ministers of the gospel, who the elect are. The Lord knoweth them that are his ; but he hath not given this knowledge to any of the children of men. We are not warranted to infer from the former sins of any person that he shall not, at some future period, be conducted by the grace of God to repentance ; and therefore we are not warranted to infer that the counsels and exhortations of the Divine word, which are some of the instruments of the grace of God, shall finally prove vain with regard to any individual. But although it is in this way impossible for a discrimination to be made in the manner of publishing the gospel, and although many may receive the calls and commands of the gospel who are not in the end to be saved, the Calvinists do not admit that even with regard to them these calls and commands are wholly without effect. For they say that the publication of the gospel is attended with real benefit even to those who are not elected. It points out to them their duty ; it restrains them from flagrant transgressions,

which would be productive of much present inconvenience, and would aggravate their future condemnation ; it has contributed to the diffusion and enlargement of moral and religious knowledge, to the refinement of manners, and to the general welfare of society. And it exhibits such a view of the condition of man, and of the grace from which the remedy proceeds, as magnifies both the righteousness and the compassion of the Supreme Ruler, and leaves without excuse those who continue in sin.

“The Calvinists say further, that, although these general uses of the publication of the gospel come very far short of that saving benefit which is confined to the elect, there is no want of meaning or of sincerity in the expostulations of Scripture, or in its reproaches and pathetic expressions of regret with regard to those who do not obey the counsels and commands that are addressed to all. For these counsels and commands declare what is the duty of all, what they feel they ought to perform, what is essential to their present and their future happiness, and what no physical necessity prevents them from doing. There is indeed a moral inability, — a defect in their will. But the very object of counsels and commands is to remove this defect ; and if such a defect rendered it improper for the Supreme Ruler to issue commands, every sin would carry with it its own excuse, and the creatures of God might always plead that they were absolved from the obligation of his law, because they were indisposed to obey it. It is admitted by the Calvinists that the moral inability in those who are not elected is of such a kind as will infallibly prevent their obeying the commands of God ; and it is a part of their system, that the Being who issues these commands has resolved to withhold from such persons the grace which alone is sufficient to remove that inability. In accounting for these commands, therefore, they are obliged to have recourse to a distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God. They understand by his revealed will, that which is preceptive, which declares the duty of his creatures, containing commands agreeable to the sentiments of their minds and the constitution of their nature, and delivering promises which shall certainly be fulfilled to all who obey the commands. They understand by his secret will, his own purpose in distributing his favors and arranging the condition of his creatures ; a purpose which is founded upon the wisest reasons, and is infallibly carried into execution by his sovereign power, but which, not being made known to his creatures, cannot possibly be the rule of their conduct.” — (Hill's Lectures.)

Many additional quotations, from Calvinistic authors of the highest repute, might be adduced, to show, that however much they may vary on points of little or no importance, yet, when they come to the main question involved in their controversy with Arminians, they perfectly

harmonize; but we deem it unnecessary to dwell longer upon this point.

It is only necessary for us particularly to inquire for the sense in which they use scholastic and technical terms, and we may readily see, that, however diversified the course of illustration and reasoning which they pursue, they arrive at the same ultimate conclusion. Whether they speak of a universal or limited atonement; whether they present the offer of gospel grace in terms the most general and unlimited, or with marked restriction and reservation; whether they be supralapsarian or sublapsarian in their peculiar views of the covenant of redemption; whether they be ranked with Antinomians or moderate Calvinists; whether they be designated as Baxterians or Hopkinsians, as New or Old School; whether they dwell mostly on free agency and sufficient grace, or on Divine sovereignty and philosophic necessity; or in whatever else they may differ, they arrive at the same ultimate conclusion on the great question we have proposed, as containing the gist of the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. They do not believe that the atonement of Christ so extends to all men as to make salvation possible for them.

Having said thus much, in order to present clearly the true attitude of Calvinists with regard to the main point at issue, and to show their essential agreement on the main question, we would now briefly define the genuine Arminian ground with regard to the same leading question. Preparatory to this, however, we will first present a brief account of that system of Christian doctrine denominated Arminianism.

“Arminianism, strictly speaking, is that system of religious doctrine which was taught by Arminius, professor of divinity in the University of Leyden. If, therefore, we would learn precisely what Arminianism is, we must have recourse to those writings in which that divine himself has stated and expounded his peculiar tenets. This, however, will by no means give us an accurate idea of that which, since his time, has been usually denominated Arminianism. On examination, it will be found that, in many important particulars, those who have called themselves Arminians, or have been accounted such by others, differ as widely from the nominal head and founder of their sect, as he himself did from Calvin and other doctors of Geneva.

“The tenets of the Arminians may be comprised in the following five articles, relating to predestination, universal redemption, the corruption of men, conversion, and perseverance, viz. :—

“1. That God from all eternity determined to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should con-

tinue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end his Divine succors; so that election was conditional, and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity and persevering wickedness.

“2. That Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and death, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of the Divine benefits.

“3. That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing any good thing; and that, therefore, it is necessary, in order to his salvation, that he be regenerated and renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

“4. That this Divine grace or energy of the Holy Ghost begins and perfects everything that can be called good in man, and consequently all good works are to be attributed to God alone; that, nevertheless, this grace is offered to all, and does not force men to act against their inclinations, but may be resisted and rendered ineffectual by the perverse wills of impenitent sinners.

“5. That God gives to the truly faithful, who are regenerated by his grace, the means of preserving themselves in this state; and though the first Arminians made some doubt with respect to the closing part of this article, their followers uniformly maintain that the regenerate may lose true justifying faith, forfeit their state of grace, and die in their sins.”—(Watson’s Biblical Dictionary.)

From the above account of the general principles of Arminianism, we conclude, in reference to the great question which we have proposed, that all genuine Arminians agree,—

1. That, notwithstanding the atonement has been made, those to whom the gospel is addressed cannot be saved without faith in Christ.

2. That mankind, by the exercise of their own natural powers, are incapable of believing in Christ unto salvation, without the supernatural influence of Divine grace through the Holy Spirit.

3. That the assisting grace of God is, through the atonement, so extended to every man as to enable him to partake of salvation.

Thus it may be seen, that while the Arminians discard the merit of works, or the ability to save themselves, yet they all agree in believing that the atonement of Christ so extends to all men as to make salvation possible for them. As we have now shown that all genuine Calvinists and Arminians are fairly at issue with regard to the *extent of the atonement* so as to make salvation possible to all men, and as the substance

of the entire controversy between them is plainly involved in that single question, we are now prepared to appeal "to the law and the testimony." On a subject of so great importance, we can confidently rely on nothing short of "Thus saith the Lord." And, happy for the honest inquirer after truth, upon no subject is the Holy Volume more copious and explicit. But as the present lecture is, perhaps, already sufficiently extended, we must defer the scriptural investigation of the question till the next lecture.

We trust that no unfairness has been exercised in the exhibit which we have made of the peculiar views of Calvinists and Arminians, and that we may now impartially examine the question.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XIV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Has there been much diversity of sentiment in the church relative to the <i>extent</i> of the atonement?</p> <p>2. Into what two great parties have Christians been divided on this subject?</p> <p>3. Why should caution and forbearance be exercised on this subject?</p> <p>4. Has this controversy always been conducted in a proper spirit?</p> <p>5. What is the view of Arians, Socinians, &c., in reference to the extent of the atonement?</p> <p>6. What peculiar view is taken by a certain class of Universalists?</p> <p>7. Upon what false assumption is this scheme based?</p> <p>8. Has the same view of the nature of atonement been adopted by any others?</p> <p>9. Do the Scriptures present the atonement in the light of a commercial transaction?</p> <p>10. In what light, then?</p> <p>11. To admit this view of the nature of atonement, would the salvation of all for whom it was made necessarily follow?</p> <p>12. What then would be the controversy between Calvinists and Universalists?</p> <p>13. How is this scheme refuted?</p> | <p>14. In what great question is embraced the substance of the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians?</p> <p>15. What are the three different views taken by Calvinists on this subject?</p> <p>16. Is there any essential difference in these schemes on the subject of the main question?</p> <p>17. What distinguished divines are mentioned as having advocated the latter?</p> <p>18. How have Calvinists endeavored to justify themselves in offering salvation to all?</p> <p>19. Have they in this way successfully vindicated their consistency?</p> <p>20. What does Mr. Baxter mean by the phrase "sufficient grace?"</p> <p>21. What does Dr. Hill mean by <i>moral inability</i>, and by the <i>revealed</i> and the <i>secret</i> will of God?</p> <p>22. What is the ultimate conclusion of all classes of Calvinists on the question proposed?</p> <p>23. What is the substance of the brief account given of Arminianism?</p> <p>24. In what three points, connected with the proposed question, do all genuine Arminians agree?</p> <p>25. Why may we appeal with confidence to the Scriptures on this question?</p> |
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LECTURE XV.

THE ATONEMENT.—ITS EXTENT.

IN the preceding lecture, we saw that the main point of dispute between Calvinists and Arminians, in reference to the extent of the atonement, is embraced in the following question :—*Does the atonement of Christ so extend to all mankind as to make salvation possible for them?* Upon this question, we endeavored to show that all genuine Calvinists assume the negative, and all genuine Arminians the affirmative.

That the affirmative is the real doctrine of Scripture, we shall now endeavor to prove.

I. Our first argument on this subject is founded upon those passages of Scripture in which, in speaking of the death or the atonement of Christ, *terms of universality are used* ; such as, “*the world*,” “*the whole world*,” “*all men*,” &c.

This class of texts is so numerous, that we need only select a few of many. John i. 29. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*.” John iii. 16, 17. “For God so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into *the world* to condemn *the world*, but that *the world* through him might be saved.” John iv. 42. “This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of *the world*.” John vi. 51. “And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of *the world*.” 2 Cor. v. 14. “For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead.” Heb. ii. 9. “That he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*.” 1 John ii. 2. “And he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of *the whole world*.” 1 Tim. iv. 10. “Who is the Saviour of *all men*, especially of those that believe.” 2 Cor. v. 19. “God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself.” 1 Tim. ii. 6. “Who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time.” It has already been shown, in the discussion of the nature of the atonement, what is implied in Christ’s dying “for us,” or “for the world.” With Calvinists, at least, there can be no evasion on this point ; for none have more successfully than they, when contending against the Socinians, demonstrated

that the phrase "to die for," as used in application to the death of Christ, means *to die instead of, as a vicarious and expiatory sacrifice*. This point, then, being settled, which Calvinists will cheerfully admit, we may ask, how is it possible for language more clearly and forcibly to teach that Christ died for *all men*, so as to make salvation possible for them, than it is taught in the passages adduced? He is said to have died "for all," "for the world," "for every man," and, as if expressly to preclude all possibility for cavil, either in reference to the nature or the extent of his atonement, he is said to have given himself a "*ransom for all*," to be "*reconciling the world unto himself*," and to be the "*propitiation for the sins of the whole world*."

The reply of the Calvinists to this argument is, that the terms "all men," "the world," &c., are sometimes used, in Scripture, in a limited sense. In reference to this, we may observe, that it cannot be admitted as a principle in criticism, that because a term is *sometimes* used in an unusual sense, and one different from the most obvious and general meaning, therefore it must so be understood in other places, even when there is nothing in the context to justify or require that unusual sense. Although we may admit that the terms "world" and "all men" may sometimes be used in a restricted sense, the conclusion which the Calvinists would draw from this admission is a *non sequitur*;—it does not follow that the terms are to be restricted in the passages above quoted. So far from the context requiring this restriction, which would be necessary to the validity of the Calvinistic plea in question, we may confidently affirm that the entire connection and scope of the passages forbid the possibility of the terms being restricted. When our Saviour says, "God so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in him," &c., it is clear that the world for whom the Saviour was given cannot be restricted to the elect; for the restriction which immediately follows, and promises "eternal life," not to the world, but to such of the world as should believe, is positive evidence that the world for whom the Saviour was given would not all be saved. When St. Paul says, "We thus judge, that if one died *for all*, then were *all dead*," he proves the universality of spiritual death, or, (as Macknight paraphrases the passage,) of "condemnation to death," from the fact that Christ "died for all." Now if Christ only died for the elect, the apostle's argument could only prove that the elect were spiritually dead, or condemned to death, which would be a violent perversion of the sense of the passage. When the apostle calls Christ the "Saviour of *all men*," especially of those that believe," believers are evidently specified as only a part of the "all men" of whom Christ is said to be "the Saviour." When St. John declares that Christ is "the propitiation for *our sins*,"

and not for *ours only*, but also for the *sins of the whole world*," believers are first specified, as identified with the apostle, by the phrase "our sins;" and hence, when it is added, "not for ours only, but also for the sins of *the whole world*," it is evident that the term should be taken in the widest sense as embracing all mankind.

The Scriptures are their own best interpreter; and, where it can be done, one passage should be explained by another. If, therefore, it could be shown, that the same writers have, in other places, used these general terms to designate the *elect*, or believers, as such, there would be more plausibility in the restricted construction of Calvinists; but this is so far from being the case, that the elect or believers, as such, are constantly, in the Scriptures, contradistinguished from "the world." The terms of universality, in the passages quoted, are never, in Scripture, applied to the elect or believers, as such. When St. John says that Christ is "the propitiation for the sins of *the whole world*," the sense in which he uses the term may be learned from that other expression of his, where he saith, "*the whole world* lieth in wickedness." When St. Paul says that Christ "tasted death for *every man*," he uses the phrase "every man" in as wide a sense as when he informs us that "every man" is to be raised from the dead "in his own order." When the Saviour informs us that he came "not to condemn *the world*, but that *the world* through him might be saved," he refers to the same world of which he speaks when he says to his disciples, "If ye were of *the world*, *the world* would love his own; but because ye are not of *the world*, but I have chosen you out of *the world*, therefore *the world* hateth you." We may, therefore, arrive at the conclusion, from those passages of Scripture in which, in speaking of the death of Christ, terms of universality are used, that the atonement of Christ so extends to all mankind as to make salvation possible for them.

II. Our second argument is founded upon *those passages which contrast the death of Christ with the fall of our first parents*. 1 Cor. xv. 22. "For as in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*." It is admitted that in this passage the resurrection of the body is the principal topic of discussion; nevertheless, there is here a clear inferential proof that Christ died for all men, so as to make salvation attainable by them. For if, by virtue of his death and resurrection, all men are to be redeemed from the grave, then it will follow that all men were represented by Christ in the covenant of redemption; and if so, he must have died as an expiation for their sins; and how he could do this, without intending to make salvation attainable by them, will be difficult to reconcile with reason and Scripture.

Rom. v. 15, &c. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.

For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here the "free gift" is represented as transcending or going beyond the "offence," which it could not do if it is only designed to make salvation possible to a part of those who fell by the "offence." Again; as "all men" are here represented as being brought into condemnation by "the offence of one," even so the "free gift" is said to come "upon all men unto (*εἰς, in order to*) justification of life." This implies a possibility of salvation; and, from this passage, it is just as plain that all may be saved through Christ, as that all are condemned in Adam.

III. Our third argument is founded upon *those passages which teach that Christ died for such as do or may perish.* 2 Pet. ii. 1. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that *bought* them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 1 Cor. viii. 11. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, *for whom Christ died?*" Rom. xiv. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat, *for whom Christ died.*" Other passages of this class might be adduced, but we think these are sufficient to show that some of those who have been bought by Christ, and for whom he died, do or may perish. Now, as they were bought by Christ, and as he died for them, according to what has already been shown, their salvation was once possible; and if the salvation of some who perish was possible, the reasonable inference is that the salvation of all mankind is made possible through the atonement of Christ.

IV. Our fourth argument is founded upon *those passages which authorize the preaching of the gospel to ALL MEN, and require ALL MEN to repent and believe.* Here we will first notice the grand commission of Christ to his apostles. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Again; to show further that it is made the duty of all men to repent and believe, we refer to the following passages. John iii. 18 and 36. 'He that *believeth* on him is not condemned: but he that believeth *not* is condemned already, because he *hath not believed* in the name of the

only begotten Son of God. He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John xx. 31. "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvii. 30. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now *commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*"

We quote the above passages merely as a sample of the general tenor of the gospel proclamation and requirement. That we may perceive the irresistible force of the proof from these texts that salvation is made attainable to all men, we would observe,

1. The gospel means *good news*. It is a message of peace and salvation.

2. The commission to preach this gospel is given in terms of universality. The apostles are commanded to "go into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature.*" They are commanded to go and "teach all nations," and to teach them "to observe *all things* whatsoever" has been commanded.

3. Repentance toward God, and faith in the gospel message and plan of salvation, are required of all to whom the gospel is preached. Nothing can be plainer than this, from the passages adduced. "*All men, everywhere,*" are commanded "to *repent.*" The promise to him that believeth is, that he "shall be saved," he "shall not be condemned," and he "shall have life" through the name of Christ. Now, upon the supposition that salvation is made attainable to all mankind, the propriety and consistency of all this are apparent; but upon the supposition that salvation is made attainable only to the elect portion of mankind, (according to the tenets of Calvinism,) we must deny every principle above stated as being proved by the Scriptures, or inevitably involve ourselves in manifest inconsistency and absurdity. This may be clearly shown in the following manner. 1. The gospel is GOOD NEWS; or, as it is plainly expressed in Scripture, it is "glad tidings of great joy to all people." Now, if the gospel only proposes a possible salvation to the elect, it cannot be good news to those for whose salvation it contains no possible provision. If it be said that it provides at least temporal mercies, and the common "ineffectual" calls and influences of the Spirit, for all men, we reply, that the admission of this, according to the Calvinistic scheme, so far from rendering the condition of the non-elect more tolerable, or furnishing the least evidence that the gospel can be good news to them, only aggravates the misery of their condition, and furnishes an

additional evidence that the gospel cannot be to them good news, or "glad tidings of great joy."

(1.) If all the temporal blessing of life, as Calvinists do not deny, flow from the covenant of redemption, then it will follow that but for the atonement of Christ the blessing of personal existence itself never could have been enjoyed by any but the first sinning pair, and, consequently, none others could have been exposed to personal suffering; therefore, as it is clear that non-existence itself would be preferable to a state of inevitable, conscious and eternal misery, so it is also evident that life, with its attendant mercies, according to Calvinism, is not a blessing, but a curse, to the non-elect; and if they derive this through the gospel, or atonement of Christ, that gospel itself must be to them a curse. Again; if, as Calvinism teaches, these temporal mercies, and the common call and influence of the Spirit, cannot possibly be effectual with any but the elect, and the abuse of these mercies, and the rejection of this "common call" of the gospel and the Spirit, will tend to greater condemnation and misery, then it follows, that, as the non-elect cannot possibly avoid this abuse and neglect, the mercies of life and the calls and influences of the gospel and the Spirit tend inevitably to the aggravation of their misery, and must be to them a real curse.

(2.) The commission to preach this gospel is given in terms of *universality*. Now if all men are required to believe, this is reasonable and consistent; but if this is the duty only of the elect, then the non-elect do right in refusing to believe, and, of course, cannot consistently be condemned for their unbelief; which conclusion is flatly contradictory to the Scriptures. But if it be said that the non-elect are required to believe, although they cannot possibly do so unless God see proper to give them the moral ability, which he has from eternity determined to withhold, then it will follow, that God, who is said not to be a "hard master," requires more of his creatures than they can possibly perform, and condemns and punishes them eternally for not doing absolute impossibilities; which is alike repugnant to reason, justice, and Scripture.

(3.) *Repentance and faith* are required of *all men*. If this be denied, the whole tenor of the gospel is flatly contradicted, and such as can be driven to so fearful a position we may justly apprehend are beyond the reach of reason or Scripture. But if it be admitted that all men are required to repent and believe, then we ask, according to Calvinism, for what purpose is this requirement made? If the salvation of the non-elect is absolutely impossible, how could they be saved even if we were to suppose them to believe? Could their faith effect that which God has decreed never shall be effected? Surely not. And how, we ask, can salvation be promised on the condition of faith, and damnation be threat-

ened as the consequence of unbelief, if neither the one nor the other depends in the least upon the agency of man? We are driven to the conclusion, that, according to Calvinism, both *salvation*,—the *end*, and *faith*,—the means, are absolutely impossible to the non-elect; and that, therefore, we must either deny that the gospel commission addresses them, and makes it their duty to repent and believe, or admit that they are to be eternally punished, by a just and merciful Creator, for not attaining an impossible end by the use of impossible means. The latter alternative involves horrible absurdities; the former contradicts the Bible: for Calvinists there is no middle ground; and they may be left to choose their position for themselves.

V. Our fifth argument is founded upon *those passages which show that salvation is offered to all, and that men's failure to obtain salvation is attributable to their own fault.* Deut. xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Prov. i. 24, 25. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." John v. 40. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John iii. 19. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." 2 Pet. iii. 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The passages of Scripture belonging to the present class are very numerous, but the above are so explicit that it is needless to multiply quotations. It only remains for us to inquire in what manner the effort is made by Calvinists to evade their force. As there are no texts of a

like plain and explicit character to oppose to these, and show that Christ *did not* so die for all men as to authorize the offer of salvation to *all*, and to render the damnation of those that perish attributable to their own fault, the truth of this leading position is seldom denied by Calvinists of the present day. But the great difficulty is, to reconcile the principles of Calvinism with the doctrine here so clearly established. Their general course has been, to descant upon the nature of general and effectual calling, the distinction between natural and moral ability, the invincibility of Divine grace, &c.; and then, as if conscious that they had failed in their attempt to reconcile their principles with this Bible truth, they have begged the question, and taking it for granted that the tenets of Calvinism, (the very thing in dispute,) are true, they have launched forth in a strain of pathetic admonition concerning the imbecility of human reason and the impiety of "man's replying against God."

That such may clearly be seen to be the course taken by Calvinists on this subject, I will here present a quotation from one of their standard writers.

"Several distinctions have been proposed, in order to throw some light on this dark subject. The external call, it has been said, is extended to the elect and the reprobate in a different manner. It is addressed to the elect primarily and directly, the ministry of the gospel having been instituted for their sake, to gather them into the church, insomuch that, if none of them remained to be saved, it would cease. It respects the reprobate secondarily and indirectly, because they are mixed with the elect, who are known to God alone, and consequently it could not be addressed to them without the reprobate being included. This dispensation has been illustrated by rain, which, descending upon the earth according to a general law, the final cause of which is the fructification of the soil, falls upon places where it is of no use, as rocks and sandy deserts. Again; it has been said that the end of the external call may be viewed in a two-fold light, as it respects God, and as it respects the call; and these may be distinguished as the end of the worker and the end of the work. The end of the work, or of the external call, is the salvation of men, because it is the natural tendency of the preaching of the gospel to lead them to faith and repentance. But this is not the end of the worker, or God, who does not intend to save all who are called, but those alone to whom he has decreed to give effectual grace. I shall not be surprised to find that these distinctions have not lessened the difficulty in your apprehension. While they promise to give a solution of it, they are neither more nor less than a repetition of it in different words. I shall subjoin only another observation, which has been frequently made,

that, although God does not intend to save the reprobate, he is serious in calling them by the gospel; for he declares to them what would be agreeable to him, namely, that they should repent and believe, and he promises most sincerely, eternal life to all who shall comply. The call of the gospel does not show what he has purposed to do, but what he wills men to do. From his promises, his threatenings, and his invitations, it only appears that it would be agreeable to him that men should do their duty, because he necessarily approves of the obedience of his creatures, and that it is his design to save some of them; but the event demonstrates that he had no intention to save them all; and this should not seem strange, as he was under no obligation to do so. Mr. Burke, in his treatise concerning the sublime and beautiful, has observed, when speaking of the attempt of Sir Isaac Newton to account for gravitation by the supposition of a subtle elastic ether, that ‘when we go but one step beyond the immediately sensible qualities of things, we go out of our depth. All we do after is but a faint struggle that shows we are in an element which does not belong to us.’ We may pronounce, I think, these attempts to reconcile the universal call of the gospel with the sincerity of God, to be a faint struggle to extricate ourselves from the profundities of theology. They are far indeed from removing the difficulty. We believe, on the authority of Scripture, that God has decreed to give salvation to some, and to withhold it from others. We know, at the same time, that he offers salvation to all, in the gospel; and to suppose that he is not sincere, would be to deny him to be God. It may be right to endeavor to reconcile these things, because knowledge is always desirable, and it is our duty to seek it as far as it can be attained. But if we find that beyond a certain limit we cannot go, let us be content to remain in ignorance. Let us reflect, however, that we are ignorant in the present case only of the connection between two truths, and not of the truths themselves, for these are clearly stated in the Scriptures. We ought therefore to believe both, although we cannot reconcile them. Perhaps the subject is too high for the human intellect in its present state. It may be, that, however correct our notions of the Divine purposes seem, there is some misapprehension, which gives rise to the difficulty. In the study of theology, we are admonished at every step to be humble, and feel the necessity of faith, or an implicit dependence upon the testimony of him who alone perfectly knows himself, and will not deceive us.”—(Dick’s Theology, Lecture 65.)

In reference to the above, we may observe, that Dr. Dick fully admits the universality of the calls and invitations of the gospel, but contends, at the same time, that God “intends to save those alone to whom

he has decreed to give effectual grace." To reconcile this with the sincerity of God, after repeating several of the commonly used Calvinistic solutions, he intimates is beyond the powers of man, and the attempt should be placed among "the faint struggles to extricate ourselves from the profundities of theology." This, while it speaks well for the candor of the learned author, is a fair acknowledgment that human reason cannot reconcile the leading principle of Calvinism with the leading principle of the gospel. The leading principle of Calvinism, which distinguishes it from Arminianism, is, that *salvation is not made possible to all men*. The leading principle and prominent feature of the gospel is, that *salvation is offered to all, and those who perish do so through their own fault*. Now these two propositions, it is admitted, are irreconcilable by human reason. If so, when it shall be clearly proved from the Bible that the gospel does not make salvation possible to all men, then the attempt to reconcile them may be styled "a faint struggle to extricate ourselves from the profundities of theology." But as that proposition is the very point in dispute, which we contend never has been and never can be proved, this, we would say, is only "a faint struggle," by Calvinists, "to extricate themselves," not from "the profundities of theology," but from the absurdities of Calvinism!

Either it is the duty of all men to believe the gospel, or it is not. If we say it is not, we plainly contradict the Scriptures which we have quoted. If we say that it is, then it follows that it is possible for all men to believe, or it is the duty of some men to do what is absolutely impossible; which is absurd. But if we admit that it is possible for all men to believe, then it follows, either that those from whom God has decreed to withhold the moral ability to believe, may believe, or he has not so decreed in reference to any. To admit the former proposition implies a contradiction; to admit the latter destroys Calvinism.

Again; if we admit that all men may attain unto faith, then it follows that all men may attain unto salvation, or that some believers may perish. The latter is contradictory to Scripture; the former is contradictory to Calvinism.

Further; as we have shown from the Scriptures that those who fail to obtain salvation do so through their own fault, and not through any fault of God, then it follows, either that some may be saved without faith, or that all who lack saving faith do so through their own fault; but if all who lack saving faith do so through their own fault, then their not believing cannot result solely from the decree of God to withhold from them the moral ability to believe; otherwise, they are made answerable, and even punishable, for the Divine decrees. To suppose that men are answerable and punishable for the Divine decrees, is

either to suppose that the decrees are wrong, which is impious, or to suppose that men are to be eternally punished for what is right, which is alike unscriptural and absurd. Calvinists sometimes, in order to evade the consequences resulting from their position, (that the reprobate are justly punishable for their unbelief, notwithstanding God has decreed to withhold from them that ability without which it is impossible for them to believe,) endeavor to elude the question, by asserting that the reprobate continue in unbelief willingly, and in rejecting the gospel act according to their own choice. But this, instead of removing the difficulty, only shifts it one step further; for if, as the Calvinists say, they have no power to will, or to choose differently from what they do in this case, they can no more be punishable for their perverse will and wicked choice than if they were as destitute of all mental and moral powers as a stock or a stone. To pursue this argument further is needless. It is impossible, by any evasion or philosophical distinction, to avoid the conclusion that, according to those passages of Scripture which we have adduced to show that men's failure to obtain salvation is attributable to their own fault, the atonement of Christ has made salvation attainable to all mankind.

VI. Our next argument is founded upon *those passages which teach the possibility of final apostasy from the faith, and warn Christians against it.*

As the subject of apostasy will be particularly considered in its proper place, our remarks here shall be brief, and principally designed to show the necessary connection between those two great Bible doctrines,—*the possibility of final apostasy*, and *the possibility of salvation to all*. These two doctrines mutually strengthen and support each other, inasmuch that, if we admit the one, we cannot deny the other, without manifest inconsistency. As the Calvinistic scheme denies any possibility of salvation to the reprobate, so it secures absolutely and infallibly the salvation of the elect.

If, then, it can be shown that any have finally apostatised, or are in danger of finally apostatising, from a state of gracious acceptance, or even from a hopeful state, in reference to eternal salvation, to a hopeless one, it will follow, that, as some who perish were in a state of possible salvation, even to those termed reprobates by the Calvinists salvation is attainable; and if this be proved, the possibility of salvation to all men will not be denied.

As the Scriptures present instances of some who have fallen from a hopeful to a hopeless state, so they are full of warnings to the righteous, which show that they are not secure against the possibility of a similar apostasy. 2 Thess. ii. 10 — 12. "Because they received not the love

of the truth that they *might be saved*. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all *might be damned*, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." From this passage it is evident, 1. That these characters were once in a hopeful state,—they "might" have been "saved;" consequently, their state was superior to that of the Calvinistically reprobate. 2. They fell from that state to a state of hopeless abandonment,—they were judicially given over, and divinely visited with "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all *might be damned*;" consequently, they could not have belonged to the Calvinistically elect. Heb. vi. 4—6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, ('and yet have fallen away,'—Macknight,) to renew them again unto repentance." We here enter into no discussion of the peculiar character of these apostates, further than to observe, 1. That their apostasy was hopeless,—it was "impossible to renew them again unto repentance;" this, the Calvinists admit. 2. Their state had been hopeful. This is evident from the reason given for the subsequent hopelessness of their condition. If, as here stated, the hopelessness of their condition arose from the impossibility of "renewing them again unto repentance," it necessarily follows, that, if they could have been thus "renewed," their case would have been hopeful. And if so, then their case once was hopeful; for the hopelessness of their condition is made to appear, not from the "impossibility" of "renewing them" unto a genuine repentance, which, (according to Calvinism,) they had never experienced, but the same repentance which they once had. This is evident from the import of the word "AGAIN;"—"It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Therefore, it follows, that their former repentance was genuine; and these apostates had evidently passed from a hopeful to a hopeless condition. As the condition of the Calvinistically reprobate is never hopeful, they could not have belonged to that class; and as the condition of the Calvinistically elect is never hopeless, so neither could they have belonged to that class. It thus appears that the above passage cannot be interpreted on Calvinistic principles; nor in any way, with consistency, without admitting the possibility of salvation to all men.

Again; that the Scriptures are full of cautions to the righteous and warnings against apostasy, is admitted by Calvinists. From this it may be conclusively argued,—1. That, upon the supposition that the righteous are in no danger of final apostasy, there can be no propriety

in warning them against it. 2. If the righteous are in danger of final apostasy, then it follows, either that the reprobate, according to Calvinism, may obtain pardon here, or that the elect may perish everlastingly ; — either of which is destructive to the Calvinistic tenets, and demonstrative that the cautions and warnings given to the righteous in the Scriptures, can only be consistently interpreted upon the supposition that salvation is attainable by all men.

The sum of what has been said is briefly this : — The Scriptures prove the proposition with which we set out,

1. By those texts in which, in speaking of the death or atonement of Christ, terms of universality are used.

2. By those which contrast the death of Christ with the fall of our first parents.

3. By those which teach that Christ died for such as do or may perish.

4. By those which authorize the preaching of the gospel to all men, and require all men to repent and believe.

5. By those which show that salvation is offered to all, and that men's failure to obtain it is attributable to their own fault.

6. By those which teach the possibility of final apostasy from the faith, and warn Christians against it.

According to the plain and unsophisticated meaning of all these classes of Scripture texts, we think it has been made to appear, that *the atonement of Christ so extends to all men as to make their salvation attainable.*

In this discussion, we have appealed directly to the Scriptures, and although we have only adduced a small number of the passages which directly bear upon the question, yet we deem further quotations on this head unnecessary.

It remains yet to consider those passages from which Calvinists deduce inferential proofs of their peculiar views of predestination, election, &c., and the bearing of those subjects upon the great question before us, as well as to examine the prominent reasons by which the view herein presented has been defended or assailed. But these points we defer for another lecture.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XV.

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| QUESTION 1. What is the main proposition considered in this lecture?
2. Upon what class of texts is the first argument based?
3. What are the passages adduced?
4. In what way do Calvinists attempt to evade their force?
5. What is the reply to their reasoning on this subject?
6. Upon what class of texts is the second argument based, and what are they?
7. Upon what class of texts is the third argument based?
8. What are the texts, and how is the proof deduced?
9. Upon what class of texts is the fourth argument based?
10. What are the texts, and how is the proof deduced?
11. Upon what class of texts is the fifth argument based?
12. What are the texts adduced?
13. In what manner have Calvinists replied? | 14. From whom is a quotation made for illustration?
15. What is said in reference to this quotation?
16. In what manner is the argument from these passages of Scripture carried out?
17. Upon what class of texts is the sixth argument based?
18. What two great doctrines are here said to be intimately connected?
19. What are the texts adduced?
20. How is the argument founded upon them?
21. How is an argument founded upon the cautions given to Christians?
22. How is the whole argument of this lecture summed up?
23. What grand proposition does it establish?
24. What important points are deferred for another lecture? |
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LECTURE XVI.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.—PREDESTINATION, ELECTION, FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND SOVEREIGNTY.

IN the preceding lecture, we endeavored to prove, by a direct appeal to the Scriptures, that *the atonement so extends to all men as to make salvation possible for them.*

That there are no texts of a direct and positive character in the Bible to disprove this position, has, by Calvinists themselves, generally been admitted. Yet, by inferential evidence from Scripture, as well as by a train of philosophical reasoning, they have endeavored to build up and sustain a system of doctrine exhibiting a partial atonement, or, at least, an atonement which *does not make salvation attainable to all mankind.*

In order to sustain this system, Calvinists argue from the subject of the Divine prescience, predestination, election, the Divine sovereignty, &c., as they conceive them to be taught in the Bible. A particular examination of those subjects, so as to show, that, according to the true interpretation of Scripture, no good reason can be deduced from that source in opposition to the general position which we have endeavored to sustain, is the matter now claiming our attention.

That the doctrines of the *Divine prescience* and *Divine sovereignty*, of *predestination* and *election*, are taught in the Bible, is admitted by Arminians, as well as Calvinists. None who admit the truth of revelation can deny them. Yet, with regard to their true import, there has been much controversy; nor is it likely that, on these difficult questions, a unity of sentiment among professed Christians is soon to be realized. The Arminian understands these subjects, as presented in the Scriptures, in perfect consistency with the great doctrine of general redemption, which provides, according to the proposition established in our last lecture, a possible salvation for all men; whereas the Calvinist understands them in such sense as to deduce from them arguments, satisfactory to his mind, for the establishment of his peculiar views of *particular redemption*, and a *special provision for the salvation of the elect, to the exclusion of any possibility of salvation to the rest of mankind.*

Whether the Calvinists can really establish their peculiar views upon these subjects from the Scriptures, we shall presently consider. But, in

order that we may proceed with as much fairness as possible, we choose, first, briefly to state the leading features of their system, in the language of their own acknowledged standards.

As the "Westminster Confession of Faith" is not only in doctrine the standard of the Church of Scotland, but also of the English and American Presbyterians, we quote from that volume, chapter iii., as follows:—

"3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.

"4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

"6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

"7. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

To complete more fully the account of this doctrine, we also quote from the "Large Catechism," adopted by the Church of Scotland, the answers to the twelfth and thirteenth questions.

"God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will; whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men."—"God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to

his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth,) hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice."

As a comment upon the above articles, and as a brief and comprehensive summary of the principal features in the Calvinistic scheme, we subjoin the following from Dr. Hill.

"These quotations suggest the following propositions, which may be considered as constituting the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, and in which there is an explication of most of the terms.

"1. God chose out of the whole body of mankind, whom he viewed in his eternal decree as involved in guilt and misery, certain persons who are called the elect, whose names are known to him, and whose number, being unchangeably fixed by his decree, can neither be increased nor diminished; so that the whole extent of the remedy offered in the gospel is conceived to have been determined beforehand by the Divine decree.

"2. As all the children of Adam were involved in the same guilt and misery, the persons thus chosen had nothing in themselves to render them more worthy of being elected than any others; and therefore the decree of election is called in the Calvinistic system absolute, by which word is meant that it arises entirely from the good pleasure of God, because all the circumstances which distinguish the elect from others are the fruit of their election.

"3. For the persons thus chosen, God from the beginning appointed the means of their being delivered from corruption and guilt; and by these means, effectually applied in due season, he conducts them at length to everlasting life.

"4. Jesus Christ was ordained by God to be the Saviour of these persons, and God gave them to him to be redeemed by his blood, to be called by his Spirit, and finally to be glorified with him. All that Christ did in the character of Mediator, was in consequence of this original appointment of the Father, which has received from many divines the name of the covenant of redemption; a phrase which suggests the idea of a mutual stipulation between Christ and the Father, in which Christ undertook all that work which he executed in his human nature, and which he continues to execute in heaven, in order to save the elect; and the Father promised that the persons for whom Christ died should be saved by his death. According to the tenor of this covenant of redemption, the merits of Christ are not considered as the cause of the decree of election, but as a part of that decree; in other words, God was not moved by the mediation of Christ to choose certain persons out of the

great body of mankind to be saved, but having chosen them, he conveys all the means of salvation through the channel of this mediation.

“5. From the election of certain persons, it necessarily follows that all the rest of the race of Adam are left in guilt and misery. The exercise of the Divine sovereignty in regard to those who are not elected, is called reprobation; and the condition of all having been originally the same, reprobation is called absolute in the same sense with election. In reprobation, there are two acts, which the Calvinists are careful to distinguish. The one is called preterition, the passing by those who are not elected, and withholding from them those means of grace which are provided for the elect. The other is called condemnation, the act of condemning those who have been passed by, for the sins which they commit. In the former act, God exercises his good pleasure, dispensing his benefits as he will; in the latter act, he appears as a judge, inflicting upon men that sentence which their sins deserve. If he had bestowed upon them the same assistance which he prepared for others, they would have been preserved from that sentence; but as their sins proceeded from their own corruption, they are thereby rendered worthy of punishment; and the justice of the Supreme Ruler is manifested in condemning them, as his mercy is manifested in saving the elect.”—(“Hill’s Lectures,” Book iv. ch. 7, s. 3.)

According to the foregoing account, it appears that the following are leading tenets in the Calvinistic scheme, viz.:—

1. That by *predestination*, *fore-ordination*, or the *decrees* of God, all things, whether great or small, whether good or evil, whether they relate to the physical or moral universe, whether they relate to the history of angels or to the actions of men, were, from all eternity, or before time began, firmly and unalterable fixed and determined, according to the will of God.

2. That by this predestination or fore-ordination, “some men and angels” were elected or chosen to everlasting life, and others reprobated or set apart to everlasting death.

3. That the election of some, and the reprobation of others, had no regard to faith and obedience on the one hand, or unbelief and disobedience on the other, as foreseen conditions, or causes leading thereunto.

4. That this election and reprobation are *personal*, *unconditional*, and *absolute*, insomuch that the “number of the elect” or of the reprobate can “neither be increased nor diminished.”

5. That the election of some, and the reprobation of others, is the sole originating cause of the faith and obedience of the elect, on the one hand, and of the lack of faith and obedience of the reprobate, on the other.

To sustain the peculiarities of the system which we have thus briefly sketched, the Calvinists appeal to the Scriptures in which the doctrines of predestination and election are taught, and institute a course of reasoning founded mainly on the Divine prescience and sovereignty. That we may have a clear view of the subject, and understand the nature of their arguments, we would now proceed particularly to the investigation of the Scripture doctrine of election, predestination, &c.

The term ELECTION, in the Greek Testament, is *εκλογη*, a choice, from the verb *εκλεγω*, to choose; hence, the signification of the verb to elect is to choose, and the noun election signifies a choice. According to this definition of the term, we may easily perceive, that, upon principles of rationality, several things are indispensable to constitute ELECTION.

1. There must be an *intelligent agent* to choose. As the act of choosing can only be performed by an intelligent being, to suppose an election to exist without such an agent would be absurd.

2. This intelligent being must be possessed of the principle of *free moral agency*. Choice necessarily implies freedom; hence, if the supposed agent be not morally free or unnecessitated in the act, he cannot, in the proper sense, be an agent at all; but is only an instrument, wielded by impelling forces: and in such case, as there could be no choice, in the true import of the term, so there could be no election.

3. In the next place, there must be objects presented to the mind of this intelligent agent, in order that he may make the choice or selection. To suppose an election to exist where there are no objects in reference to which to make the choice, would be as absurd as to suppose that there could be color, division, or figure, without something colored, divided, or figured.

4. Next, there must be a *difference*, real or imaginary, in the objects, in reference to which the choice is made. Where there is no difference, in the proper sense, there can be no choice. It is true, that two or more objects may be presented to the mind, and the one may be taken, and the others left, merely because it is not convenient or proper to take all; but in this case, there cannot properly be any rational choice. A choice or election implies a reason on which it is founded; and this reason, or ground of choice, must be supposed to exist in the objects in reference to which the choice is made.

5. There must be a time in which the act of choosing takes place. To suppose that an act has been performed, and yet to suppose that there was no time in which it was performed, is manifestly absurd. Hence, we must either deny that to choose or elect is an act at all, or we must admit a time for its performance.

Now, we think it must be so plain that all the above specified particu-

lars are essential to constitute election, that further illustration or proof would be needless. Wherever the five particulars above enumerated are found to unite, an election must exist; but if any one of the five be lacking, an election cannot, on rational principles, exist. With these remarks upon the general definition of election, we proceed to examine the Scripture illustration of this doctrine.

In opening the Bible upon this subject, we find that there are several different kinds of election presented to our view.

1. There is a personal election of individuals to a special office or work. Christ was chosen or elected to the great office of *Mediator and Redeemer*, that he might enter upon the great work of saving an apostate world. In reference to this election, we read, in Isa. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine *elect*, in whom my soul delighteth."

King Cyrus was also chosen or elected for the special work of rebuilding the temple. In reference to this work, he was "called" by the Lord, and designated as his "shepherd," and "his anointed."

The "twelve apostles" were elected to their peculiar office by the Saviour; and St. Paul was specially chosen or elected to be the "apostle of the Gentiles."

In reference to this species of election, a little reflection will evince that it perfectly accords with the general definition of the subject given above. All the five requisites to constitute election may readily be seen to meet in each case specified. And although it is personal, individual, and, in a certain sense, absolute, yet it has no reference whatever to the fixing of the eternal destinies of men. The Saviour was chosen as the great Redeemer of the world, because he was the only proper and adequate being for the accomplishment of the exalted work. Cyrus was selected as a suitable character for the instrumental accomplishment of the Divine purpose in the rebuilding of the temple; but this election neither secured nor prevented the eternal salvation of the Persian monarch. The "twelve apostles" were chosen by our Lord, as suitable persons to accompany him in his itinerant ministry, to be witnesses of his miracles and of his resurrection, and to be the first ministers of his religion; but this election did not absolutely secure their eternal salvation, for one of their number grievously apostatized and went to perdition. St. Paul was elected as a suitable minister to bear the gospel message to the learned Gentiles; but this election did not absolutely secure his eternal salvation, for we hear him strongly expressing his fears "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a *castaway*." So that it is clear, that, from this personal and individual election to a peculiar office or work, no countenance is given to the Cal-

vinian notion of personal and unconditional election, from all eternity, to everlasting life.

2. The second species of election presented in Scripture is *that of nations, or bodies of people, to the participation of peculiar privileges and blessings, conferred upon them for the accomplishment of some great object of Divine benevolence, in reference to others as well as themselves.*

Thus, Abraham and his descendants were anciently chosen as the peculiar people of God, to receive the Divine law, to become conservators of the true worship, and to be the means of illumination, and of great and numerous blessings, to the world at large. In reference to this election, we read, Amos iii. 2, "You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth." 1 Chron. xvi. 13. "Ye children of Jacob, his *chosen ones*." Acts xiii. 17. "The God of this people of Israel *chose* our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt." Deut. x. 15. "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he *chose* their seed after them, even you, above all people." Deut. xiv. 2. "The Lord *hath chosen* thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."

Thus we discover that the Jews, as a nation, were, in a certain sense, an elect, chosen, and peculiar people; but this election, as all must admit, did not absolutely secure their eternal salvation. Their election, as a nation, had no such design, as we may see from the fact that many of them were not saved. This truth the Apostle Paul abundantly teaches. He says that "With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." He specifies that some of them were "idolaters," some were "fornicators," some "tempted Christ," and that God "swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest." These were the "chosen, elected," and "peculiar people" of God. How vastly different is this from the Calvinian, eternal, and unconditional election and reprobation, by which the everlasting destiny of "men and angels" is said to be unalterably fixed! In this national election of the Jews there is also implied a corresponding national rejection or reprobation of the Gentiles. Election and reprobation are inseparable: the one necessarily implies the other. In the same sense in which the Jews were elected, the Gentiles were reprobated. As the former were elected to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, so the latter were reprobated in reference to those privileges: that is, they were not called to their enjoyment, or placed in their possession. This national election, though we may admit that it conferred peculiar blessings upon one nation, which were denied to all others, yet it appears to present nothing in the divine administration revolting to the most pleasing and exalted view that can be taken of the principles of justice, equity and benevo-

lence. For be it remembered, that in proportion as the Jews were exalted above the Gentiles in point of privilege, even so, on that very account, more was required at their hands. It is one of the unalterable principles of the Divine government, that "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;" and *vice versa*. The man to whom "five talents" had been given was required to improve all that he had received, while he to whom but "one talent" had been given was only required to improve the same. Thus, while the Jews, to whom had been "committed the oracles of God," and to whom "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," were required to serve God with a fidelity and devotedness proportionate to their superior light and privileges, the Gentiles were only required to improve the privileges which had been conferred upon them, and to live up to the degree of light they possessed. Notwithstanding this election of the Jews to privileges so exalted, yet, as we have seen, they were liable to misimprove them, and many of them did so misimprove and abuse them as to perish everlastingly; and, finally, this chosen, elect, and peculiar people, for their wickedness and idolatry, their unbelief and rebellion, were severed and overthrown as a nation, their civil polity uprooted, their ecclesiastical establishment demolished, and the once favored tribes of Abraham doomed to wander in degradation and groan for centuries beneath the ban of Heaven.

But how was it with the Gentiles? Did this national election and reprobation, according to the Calvinistic interpretation of this doctrine, consign them to inevitable and eternal destruction? By no means. The supposition is not only repugnant to reason, and revolting to the feelings, but destitute of the least shadow of support from Scripture. In allusion to God's method of dealing with the ancient Gentiles, St. Paul says, "And the times of this ignorance God *winked at*;" that is, sent them no prophets to instruct them better, and consequently, in judging them, only required of them according to what they had. St. Paul, in the second chapter to the Romans, clearly shows that "there is no respect of persons with God;" and that "the Gentiles, which have not the law," may "do by nature, (that is, by the assistance which God affords them, independent of the written law,) the things contained in the law," act up to the requirements of "their conscience," and be esteemed as "just before God." That those whom God saw proper to leave for a season in a state of Gentile darkness,—destitute of written revelation,—were not thereby precluded from all possibility of eternal salvation, is further evident, from several instances, recorded in Scripture, of pious heathen; such are Melchisedec, Job, and Cornelius: but the language of St. Peter must set this question at rest: "Of a truth I

perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Since, then, it is obvious from what has been said, that the national election of the Jews, and reprobation of the Gentiles, did not absolutely secure the salvation of the former, or the damnation of the latter, it is plain that from this election Calvinism can derive no aid. Indeed, so far was the calling of Abraham, and the establishment of the church in his family, from implying the absolute dereliction of the Gentiles to eternal ruin, that it was designed as a means of illumination, and an unspeakable blessing, even to them. The establishment of the true worship in the family of Abraham was designed to counteract the prevalence of idolatry among the surrounding nations ; and the entire Jewish system of jurisprudence and religion was indeed a "light shining in a dark place." The local position of their country, their intercourse with surrounding nations, both through commerce and by reason of their frequent captivities, with many concurring circumstances, tended to diffuse abroad the lights and blessings of Judaism. Even at their temple, there was found "the court of the Gentiles," where the "stranger from a far country" might join in the worship of the true God. How plain then must it be, that this election of one nation to peculiar privileges was designed also to "bless," though in a less degree, "all the families of the earth !"

A second example of this species of election is presented in the calling of both Jews and Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel church.

There is a reference to this election in the following passages :— 1 Pet. v. 13. "The church that is at Babylon, *elected* together with you." 1 Pet. ii. 9. "But ye are a *chosen* generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." 1 Thess. i. 4. "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your *election* of God."

That we may the better understand this election, be it remembered, that the Jews, in many respects, were a typical people. Their calling and election to the peculiar privileges of the Mosaic dispensation were typical of the calling and election of both Jews and Gentiles to the superior privileges of the gospel. In the days of the apostles, the old dispensation gave place to the new. The Mosaic institution received its fulfilment ; and vast multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles were called and elected to the glorious privileges of the gospel church ; not by virtue of natural descent from Abraham, but through the medium of "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." The privileges to which they were here elected were both external,—embracing all the means of grace, and outward blessings of Christianity ; and internal,—embracing the spiritual enjoyments and blessings of pure and heartfelt religion. Many were externally embraced in the church, and in that sense elected to its privileges,

who were not elected to the full enjoyment of the spiritual blessings of the gospel. The cause of this distinction is obvious. The condition upon which they could be elected to the external privileges was that of a formal profession; but the condition of election to the full privileges of the church, both external and internal, both temporal and spiritual, was that of faith in God's Messiah. Many, no doubt, enjoyed the privileges of the former, who never attained unto the privileges of the latter election. In reference to this, it may be said, that "all were not *Israel* who were *of Israel*;"—all were not elected to the spiritual who shared the external privileges of the gospel; but election in the external sense was in order to, or designed to promote, election in the more proper sense, to the full enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel.

But let us inquire, in the next place, how this election to the privileges of the gospel church, both external and spiritual, comports with the Calvinistic scheme. The election taught in that system is, 1. *Eternal*,—"from all eternity." 2. It is *unconditional*,—"without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto." 3. It absolutely secures their eternal salvation,—“their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.”

Now, it can easily be proved, that the election under consideration contains not one of the attributes of Calvinian election as just presented.

(1.) It is not eternal. Jews and Gentiles are called and elected to the privileges of the gospel, not "from all eternity," but in time. They are called by the gospel and elected, as the apostle has said, "through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience."

(2.) It is not unconditional. "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," are everywhere presented as the condition upon which the privileges of the gospel church are to be enjoyed.

(3.) It does not absolutely secure the eternal salvation of those thus elected. That this is true so far as it is applied to the election to the external privileges of the gospel, Calvinists themselves will admit; and that it is also true as applied to the election of true believers to the spiritual, as well as the outward privileges of the gospel, is evident from the numerous warnings given to such characters against "turning back to perdition," making "shipwreck of the faith," or "departing from the living God;" and, especially, is it evident from the language of St. Peter, where he exhorts believers to "give diligence to *make their calling and election sure*." Now, if it had been made sure "from all eternity," their "diligence" could not possibly have any tendency to make it sure. Again; the Calvinistic view of election absolutely precludes

the non-elect from all possibility of salvation ; but this election of collections of persons to gospel privileges has no such bearing whatever. Thousands who were not thus elected, or who were not of the church in the apostles' days, have been brought in, in subsequent times ; and the gospel is still spreading more widely its influence, and swelling the number of its elected members. This, Calvinists cannot deny.

Again, this election of Christians to church privileges, so far from being an evidence that others, not yet thus elected, are thereby excluded from the favor of God, has a direct tendency, and is really designed to extend to them the same blessing of gospel fellowship. The church is styled "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth;" this necessarily implies, that those beyond its pale may become partakers of the same "light," and be purified by the same preservative grace, of which the actual members of the church are now possessed. Hence, we may arrive fairly at the conclusion, that this election of nations or large bodies of people to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges affords no support to Calvinian election.

3. The third and last species of election which we shall notice, as presented in the Bible, is that of *individuals chosen or elected to eternal life*.

This is brought to view in the following passages of Scripture. Matt. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are *chosen*." Eph. i. 4. "According as he *hath chosen* us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." 1 Pet. i. 2. "*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Col. iii. 12. "Put on therefore, as the *elect* of God, holy and beloved," &c.

These, and many other passages, although they may apply to that "collective" election already described, yet we admit that they also express the peculiar favor by which God calls and elects to eternal life all the finally faithful. That election of this personal and individual kind is frequently alluded to in the Scriptures, is admitted by Arminians as well as Calvinists ; but the great matter of dispute relates to the sense in which the subject is to be understood. 1. Calvinists say, that this election is "from all eternity;" this Arminians deny, except so far as the foreknowledge or purpose of God to elect may be termed election. Upon this question, then, concerning the eternity of personal and individual election, we would remark, first, that to suppose that actual election can be "from all eternity," appears manifestly absurd, and inconsistent with the import of the term to elect. It signifies to choose ; —this implies an act of the mind, and every act implies a time in which

it took place, and, consequently, a time before it took place. Hence, it would appear, that, unless we make the act of election an essential part of the Divine nature, (which is absurd,) it cannot be eternal; for that attribute will apply properly to the Divine essence only. Again, the eternity of actual election is not only absurd, as we have seen, but it is also unscriptural. St. Peter calls the saints, "elect, *through sanctification of the Spirit*," &c. Now, if they are elected "through sanctification of the Spirit," they could not have been elected till they were sanctified by the Spirit, unless we say that the end precedes the means leading to that end, or that the effect precedes the cause, which is absurd. St. Paul styles the saints, "chosen through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Now, according to the same reasoning, they could not have been actually chosen before they believed the truth; consequently, their actual election cannot be "from all eternity." We know that St. Paul, in the passage quoted, says, "God hath *from the beginning* chosen you," &c. But this cannot prove the eternity of actual election, without, as we have seen, contradicting what immediately follows; and we may be sure that the apostle did not mean to contradict himself. The meaning of St. Paul may be explained by the language of St. Peter, when he styles the saints "elect *according to the foreknowledge* of God." That is, in the purpose of God. So, St. Paul may mean, that "God hath from the beginning (according to his foreknowledge, or in his purpose) chosen you," &c. But even if we take the phrase "from the beginning" to refer to the commencement of the world, when God first laid the plan of salvation through Christ, it will not follow that the personal election of the Thessalonians was unconditional. The words may merely imply that God, from the very first institution of the covenant of grace, determined, from a foresight that they would believe and embrace the gospel, through that means to save them from their sins, and admit them to the heavenly felicity. So, then, we perceive, that, whether we understand the texts in question to refer to the unconditional election of the believing character, according to the settled principles of the gospel, or to the conditional election of individual persons, according to the same divinely established condition of faith, in either case, there can be nothing derived from this source to justify the Calvinistic scheme of eternal, unconditional, and personal election to everlasting life.

That the Calvinistic view upon this subject is self-contradictory and absurd, may easily be shown by adverting to the true definition of election, and calling to mind the several indispensable requisites for its existence, according to what has already been shown.

In view of these principles, then, we will briefly consider this personal election to eternal life.

1. Before an election can exist according to the principles of rationality, there must be an intelligent agent to perform the act of choosing. In reference to the election in question, God is this agent. St. Paul says, "According as he (God) hath chosen us in him," &c. On this point there can be no controversy. All agree that God is the great intelligent agent who chooses or elects whom he will to eternal life.

2. The second requisite to an election is, that the agent who performs the act of choosing be possessed of moral freedom. Here, also, there can be no controversy. All must agree that the Divine Being possesses moral freedom in the highest possible acceptation. He doeth "his good pleasure," and "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

3. The third thing requisite to constitute election is, that objects be presented to the mind of the intelligent agent, in reference to which he may make the choice. Here the Calvinistic scheme begins to limp; for if election be "from all eternity," it took place before the objects or persons existed concerning whom it was made. But if it be said, that it took place in the purpose of God, who, looking forward into futurity, "seeth the end from the beginning," then it will follow that it was not actual election at all, but only a determination to elect in futurity, and Calvinism falls to the ground. The former position is absurd; the latter gives up the question; and Calvinists may *elect* either horn of the dilemma.

4. The fourth thing requisite to constitute election is, that there be a real or imaginary difference in the objects in reference to which the choice is made. The word imaginary is here inserted in order to make the definition apply to election universally, whether fallible man or the Infinite Mind be the agent in the choice; but as God is infinite in knowledge, it is clear that the term can have no application when the choice is performed by him; therefore, before the election in question can exist, there must be a real difference in the objects or persons concerning whom the choice is made. Even an intelligent creature can make no rational choice where no supposed difference exists; and can we suppose that the infinite God will act in a manner that would be justly deemed blind and irrational in man? The thought is inadmissible. However far beyond the ken of the puny intellect of man the principles may lie which sway the Divine determinations, yet, we may be well assured that every act of Deity is based upon a sufficient and infallible reason. If God selects or chooses some men to eternal life, and rejects others, as all admit to be the fact, there must be a good and sufficient reason for this election. It will not do for Calvinists piously to tell us that "the Judge

of all the earth will do right," and to think that this will put out of sight the difficulty which their doctrine here involves. That God will "do right," all admit; but the question is, how can he do right if Calvinism be true? Nor will it do for them to tell us that this election is "according to the good pleasure of God's will." This we admit; but the question is, how can the Calvinistic presentation of this subject be reconciled with the declarations of Scripture in reference to the Divine will? Does not Calvinism, by telling us that this election of some men to eternal life is "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto," render this election perfectly irreconcilable with the Divine character? If, as Calvinism teaches, this choice of some men and rejection of others is made without any reference whatever to moral character, but according to the "good pleasure of God," we might perhaps still suppose that there was a sufficient reason to justify it, though concealed from our view; were it not that we are immediately informed that the moral character of the elect and reprobate, as contemplated by the Almighty in his electing love, was precisely the same. This tenet of Calvinism not only puts the reason of the choice beyond our reach, but it does more,—it puts it out of existence; for if the reason be not founded on moral character, there is no consideration left, according to the Scriptures, upon which it can be founded. Agreeably to the Bible, in the awards of the judgment day, moral character alone is taken into the account; and this is the only ground of distinction by which God can be influenced, in determining one person for glory and another for perdition. As Calvinism disavows this distinction as having any influence in election, it deprives the Divine Being of any possible reason worthy of his character for the personal election of men to everlasting life. If it be said, Calvinists themselves declare that God always acts rationally and has an infinite reason for all his acts, we reply, that this only proves that their system is self-contradictory; for, as we have already shown, their scheme discards any difference in the moral character of men as influencing election; and the Scriptures everywhere show that God, in his dealings with men in reference to eternity, can be swayed by no other consideration. We arrive at the conclusion, therefore, that, however different the teachings of Calvinism, if one man is elected to everlasting life and another consigned to perdition, it is not the result of an arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable partiality, but accords with reason, equity, and justice, and is a glorious display of the harmonious perfections of God. It is because the one is good and the other bad; the one is righteous and the other unrighteous; the one is a believer and the other an unbeliever; or the one is obedient and the

other rebellious. These are the distinctions which reason, justice, and Scripture recognize; and we may rest assured they are the only distinctions which God regards in electing his people to glory, and sentencing the wicked to perdition.

5. The last thing requisite to constitute election is, that there be a time at which the act of choosing takes place. As has already been shown, the election of individuals to eternal life may be considered as existing only in the foreknowledge or purpose of God, or it may be viewed as actual. There is no possible middle ground between these positions. If we adopt the former, and say that election is only "from all eternity" when viewed as the Divine purpose to elect, we renounce one of the favorite dogmas of Calvinism, which holds that election is absolute from all eternity, and in no sense dependent on, or resulting from, foreknowledge. If we adopt the latter, we are involved in the absurdity of saying that an *actual choice* has been made, and yet that there was no time in which the act took place. And more than this, we also contradict the Scripture which plainly teaches that men are actually chosen to eternal life when they accede to the conditions of the gospel; their election is "through faith;"—"sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." From what has been said, we think it evident that neither the election of individuals to a particular office or work, nor the election of nations or bodies of people to peculiar privileges, nor that of individuals to eternal life, gives the least sanction to the Calvinistic scheme.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XVI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what subjects do Calvinists argue, to sustain their system?</p> <p>2. Are election, predestination, &c., Scripture doctrines?</p> <p>3. How are they understood by the Arminian?</p> <p>4. How by the Calvinist?</p> <p>5. What summaries of Calvinism are quoted?</p> <p>6. From what is the term <i>election</i> derived?</p> <p>7. What five particulars are presented, as essential to constitute election?</p> <p>8. What is the first election mentioned?</p> <p>9. What instances of it are given?</p> <p>10. Why does it give no support to Calvinism?</p> | <p>11. What is the second species of election specified?</p> <p>12. What is the first instance given of this?</p> <p>13. What Scriptures contain it?</p> <p>14. How does it appear that it gives no support to Calvinism?</p> <p>15. What is the next instance given?</p> <p>16. In what Scriptures is it contained?</p> <p>17. How does it appear that it gives no support to Calvinism?</p> <p>18. What is the third species of election?</p> <p>19. In what Scriptures is it contained?</p> <p>20. Does it afford any support to Calvinism?</p> <p>21. Do the five requisites of election apply to it?</p> <p>22. Do they in the Calvinistic sense?</p> <p>23. How may this be shown?</p> |
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LECTURE XVII.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.—ELECTION, PREDESTINATION, ETC.

IN the preceding lecture, we progressed so far in the investigation of the subject of election, predestination, &c., as, first, to exhibit a brief view of the Calvinistic scheme, as set forth in the acknowledged standards of several Calvinistic churches; and, secondly, to present what we conceive to be the scriptural account of this subject.

We now proceed to examine the Scripture testimony which Calvinists have alleged in support of their doctrine. To enter upon an exegetical discussion of every passage which they have quoted upon this subject, would be unnecessarily tedious; as the entire weight of their argument may be fully seen by an attention to those few prominent texts, which they almost invariably quote when they touch the Arminian controversy, and on which they mainly rely. Here, the Bible of the Calvinist will almost instinctively open upon the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

I. We would notice their argument from what is said in reference to Jacob and Esau. Rom. ix. 11—16. “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done either good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, (Rebecca,) The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” After the unanswerable refutations of the Calvinistic construction of this passage, furnished by such commentators and divines as Whitby, Taylor, Benson, Fletcher, Adam Clarke, &c., it is a little surprising that any intelligent Calvinist should continue to argue from it in favor of absolute personal election. This is more especially remarkable, as several of the most acute divines of the Calvinistic school have been impelled by candor to adopt the Arminian interpretation of the passage now before us; among whom, we might mention

Dr. Macknight, of Scotland, and Professor Stuart, of Andover. The latter, however, appears not so fully to renounce the Calvinistic interpretation as the former; but that he yields one of the principal points, may be seen from the following remarks on the thirteenth verse:—“The precedence then of Jacob is established by this declaration; but in what respect? In a temporal one, it would seem, so far as this instance is concerned. That the whole refers to the bestowment of temporal blessings and the withholding of them, is clear, not only from this passage, but from comparing Gen. xxv. 23; xxvii. 27., &c. As to *ἐπίσημα*, its meaning here is rather *privative* than *positive*. When the Hebrews compared a stronger affection with a weaker one, they called the first love, and the other hatred.”

After referring such as desire a critical and minute exposition of this passage to the commentators already mentioned, we may observe, that the argument for personal and absolute election to eternal life, from this passage, is entirely dependent upon two positions, which, if they can be fairly proved, will establish the Calvinistic view; but a failure to establish either of them will be fatal to the whole scheme. These positions are, 1. That the election here spoken of referred to Jacob and Esau, personally and individually. 2. That it referred to the absolute determination of their eternal destiny. Now if either of these positions is seen to be untenable, notwithstanding the other may be established, it will inevitably follow, that the election here presented to view, so far from establishing the Calvinistic doctrine, tends directly to its overthrow. How much more signal then must be the defeat of the Calvinist, if, upon examination, both these principles are found to be not only unsustained, but positively disproved! Such, we think, will be the result of an impartial investigation.

1. Then we inquire whether this election referred to Jacob and Esau personally and individually. That it did not, but was intended to apply to two *nations*,—the posterity of Jacob, the Jews, and the posterity of Esau, the Edomites,—is evident, 1. From the language of the entire passage, of which the apostle, in accordance with his manner, only quotes as much as was essential to his argument. The passage is recorded in Gen. xxv. 23. “And the Lord said unto her, *Two nations* are in thy womb, and *two manner of people* shall be separated from thy bowels; and the *one people* shall be stronger than the *other people*; and the *elder* shall serve the *younger*.” So far, then, from the apostle referring to Jacob and Esau personally, we here have the direct Scripture to prove that although the names of Jacob and Esau are used, it is in a representative sense: “Two nations,” or “two manner of people,” were the subject of the prophecy. Concerning them, and

not concerning Jacob and Esau, personally, it was said, "the elder shall serve the younger," and that "one shall be stronger than the other." 2. As it is contrary to the language of the prophecy that this passage should apply personally to Jacob and Esau, so it is contrary to the truth of history. Esau never did "serve" Jacob personally. Again; from the first chapter of Malachi, it may be clearly seen that the nations of the Israelites and Edomites, and not the persons of Jacob and Esau, were the subject of the prophecy. "The burden of the word of the Lord to *Israel* by Malachi. I have *loved you*, (Israel, not Jacob,) saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I *loved* Jacob, and I *hated* Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas *Edom* (not Esau personally) saith, We are impoverished," &c. Thus we see, from the Scriptures themselves, that the passage under consideration determines nothing in reference to Jacob and Esau, personally. Hence there can be no ground here for establishing the doctrine of personal and unconditional election.

2. We inquire whether this election referred to the determination of the eternal destiny of the persons concerned? Now, even if it could be made appear (which we have just seen to be contrary to Scripture) that Jacob and Esau are here personally referred to, Calvinism can derive no support, unless it be also shown that this election and reprobation, or this *loving of Jacob* and *hating of Esau*, referred to their eternal destiny. That it had no reference whatever to their eternal destiny, either as individuals or nations, but that it related entirely to temporal blessings, we might almost leave to the testimony of the most intelligent Calvinistic commentators themselves. The decision of Professor Stuart on this point we have already seen. His words are, "The whole refers to the bestowment of temporal blessings, and the withholding of them," and he directly sanctions the interpretation, that the term *μισῶσα*, in the phrase, "Esau have I hated," implies not positive hatred, but only a less degree of love. Macknight says, "What God's *hatred* of Esau was, is declared in the words of the prophecy which immediately follow, namely, '*and laid his mountains waste.*'" As Macknight was himself a Calvinist, and taught the doctrine of absolute and personal election, though he acknowledged it was not contained in the Scripture before us, his testimony may, on that account, be deemed the more valuable; hence, we quote from him the following acute observations:—

"1. It is neither said, nor is it true of Jacob and Esau personally, that the 'elder served the younger.' This is only true of their posterity. 2. Though Esau had served Jacob personally, and had been inferior to him in worldly greatness, it would have been no proof at all of

Jacob's election to eternal life, nor of Esau's reprobation. As little was the subjection of the Edomites to the Israelites in David's days a proof of the election and reprobation of their progenitors. 3. The apostle's professed purpose in this discourse being to show that an election bestowed on Jacob's posterity by God's free gift might either be taken from them, or others might be admitted to share therein with them, it is evidently not an election to eternal life, which is never taken away, but an election to external privileges only. 4. This being an election of the whole posterity of Jacob, and a reprobation of the whole descendants of Esau, it can only mean that the nation which was to spring from Esau should be subdued by the nation which was to spring from Jacob; and that it should not, like the nations springing from Jacob, be the church and people of God, nor be entitled to the possession of Canaan, nor give birth to the seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. 5. The circumstance of Esau's being elder than Jacob was very properly taken notice of, to show that Jacob's election was contrary to the right of primogeniture, because this circumstance proved it to be from pure favor. But if his election had been to eternal life, the circumstance of his age ought not to have been mentioned, because it had no relation to that matter whatever."

We deem it useless to detain upon this subject. From what has been said, we arrive at the conclusion,

1. That this election was not personal, but national.

2. That it related not to eternal life, but to temporal blessings.

The opposite of both these positions is essential to Calvinian election; therefore it follows, that this stereotyped argument of Calvinism, from the mooted case of "Jacob and Esau," so far from being sustained by Scripture, has been doubly confuted.

II. The second argument which we shall notice, as relied upon by the Calvinist, is based upon what is said in reference to Pharaoh, and the "potter and the clay." The passage is recorded in Rom. ix. 17—24. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the

vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ?”

That the argument attempted to be predicated upon this passage may be clearly seen in all its force, and fairly tested in as small a compass as practicable, we propose, first, to specify the several points insisted upon by Calvinists, the establishment of some, or all of which, is essential to the support of their doctrine ; and then, to examine the evidence by which these several points are assumed to be established. These points are :—

1. That Pharaoh is given as an instance of unconditional and eternal reprobation, being created for the express purpose that the “power of God” might “be shown” in his eternal destruction.

2. That the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart was effected by a direct influence, or positive influx, from God.

3. That in the reference to the parable of “the potter,” the making of the “one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor,” is designed to represent the right of God to create one man expressly for eternal life, and another for eternal destruction.

4. That the “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” are designed to represent persons expressly and designedly created and prepared by the Almighty for eternal death.

5. That the object of the apostle, in referring to the case of Pharaoh, and to the parable of the “potter and the clay,” was to illustrate the doctrine of personal, unconditional, and eternal election and reprobation.

Were it necessary, it might easily be shown, by a reference to numerous Calvinistic commentators and divines, that the above is a fair presentation of the positions assumed by them, when they would establish their system by a reference to the passage in question ; but this, we presume, cannot be denied ; for it must be perceptible to every reflecting mind, that, so far as reliance is placed on the Scripture now before us, the peculiar dogmas of Calvinism must stand or fall with the above propositions. And we may now be permitted in candor to say, that it will not be a difficult task to show that the above propositions resemble far more a gross perversion than a fair exposition of Scripture. This, we shall endeavor to evince, by examining each proposition separately. But, first, we would frankly acknowledge that all the above propositions have not been fairly avowed by all who have been considered Calvinists ; but at the same time, it must be conceded, on the other hand, that so far as any of them have been renounced, all dependence for the support of Calvinism from that source has also been relinquished. Some Calvinistic

writers have based the defence of their system on one, some on another, and some on several of the above positions; but seldom, if ever, has the same writer expressly avowed his reliance on all of them. Still, it should be borne in mind, that if Calvinism can derive any support whatever from the passage in question, it must be by a reliance on some of the positions above presented; consequently, if we can show that none of them can fairly be sustained, this strong hold of Calvinian defence will be demolished. But to proceed.

1. The position is assumed that *Pharaoh is given as an instance of unconditional and eternal reprobation, being created for the express purpose that the "power of God" might be shown in his eternal destruction.* If this proposition can be sustained by a fair exegesis of the Scripture, then it would seem to follow, that, as Pharaoh had been created expressly and designedly for eternal death, it would not be inconsistent with the Divine attributes to suppose that the reprobate in general were created for the same purpose; and this, we confess, would go far toward establishing Calvinian reprobation. What, we ask, is the evidence here relied upon? It is this sentence: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee." Now, before this passage can be made to sustain the proposition in question, it must be shown that the phrase, "I have raised thee up," implies, I have created thee; and that the phrase, "that I might show my power in thee," implies, that I might eternally punish thee. That neither of these positions can be sustained, we shall immediately show. The word here rendered "raised up," is ἐξήγειρά, from ἐξείργω. That this word does not mean *to create*, but merely *to rouse up*, or *to excite*, or, (as seems most in accordance with διετηρηθή, the word used in the Septuagint,) *to make to stand*, or *to preserve*, is a point conceded even by Macknight and Prof. Stuart. The following is the language of the latter, *in loc.*:—"What then is the sense of ἐξείργω, as employed in Hellenistic Greek? In the Septuagint it is a very common word, being used some seventy times. In none of these cases does it mean *to create*, *to produce*, *to raise up*, in the sense of *bringing into being*, &c.; so that those who construe ἐξήγειρά σε, *I have created thee*, or *brought thee into existence*, do that which is contrary to the Hellenistic *usus loquendi*." Whitby translates the sentence thus: "I have made thee to stand." The Targum of B. Uziel, "I have kept thee alive." Macknight favors the sense of "having preserved thee" from the plagues, &c. He paraphrases the words as follows: "Even for this same purpose I have raised thee and thy people to great celebrity, and have upheld you during the former plagues, that, in punishing you, I might show my power, and that my name, as the righteous Governor of the world, might be published

through all the earth." If, in addition to the literal import of the original word, we take into consideration the connection of the passage in the 9th of Exodus, from which the apostle quotes, we may readily be convinced that there was no reference here to the *creation* of Pharaoh for a specific purpose. The allusion evidently was to the preservation and prosperity of the Egyptian king and people, and especially to their deliverance from the plagues with which they had been visited. These had not only been brought upon them by the hand of God, but the same hand was alone able to remove them. And, but for the "long-suffering" of God, the king and people of Egypt must have perished under the first plagues; but God bore with them; he "made them to stand;" he preserved them for further trial, and for a further display of his glory. So that, without a violent and palpable perversion of the sense, there is not found the least shadow of ground for the notion that Pharaoh was here said to be created for a special purpose. There is nothing here said or implied on that subject whatever. Hence, we discover that the first branch of this position of Calvinism, so far from being sustained, is clearly refuted. It cannot be argued from the case of Pharaoh, that the reprobate are created with the express design that they may be unconditionally destroyed; and anything short of this, fails in sustaining the Calvinian scheme.

The second branch of the position is, that the phrase, "*that I might show my power in thee*," implies, *that I might eternally punish thee*. This, the language of the text itself contradicts. The import of the phrase "*that I might show my power in thee*," is clearly inferable from what immediately follows, which is exegetical of, or consequent upon, what precedes. It does not follow, and that thou mightest be eternally punished, but the language is, "and that my name might be declared in all the earth." The grand design of the Almighty, then, was not a display of his power in the eternal destruction of Pharaoh, but a declaration of his own name "throughout all the earth." For the accomplishment of this "purpose" of mercy, Pharaoh and his people were raised up and preserved, as suitable instruments. And this purpose God would accomplish through them, whether they repented and submitted to his authority or not. Had Pharaoh not hardened his heart, but yielded to the evidence of the miracles and power of the true God, he might have been the honored instrument of proclaiming from his commanding position on the throne of Egypt, that the God of Israel was the true God, and that, therefore, all nations and people should honor and serve him; and in this way, the "power of God might have been declared," and some knowledge of the true worship disseminated among all the Egyptians and all the nations with whom they had intercourse. But as the king of Egypt

voluntarily resisted the truth, refused to acknowledge the dominion of Jehovah, and impiously demanded, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go," God determined to show forth his power in Pharaoh, by sending plague after plague, and still affording him longer trial and additional testimony, that the fame of these wonders, and of the signal overthrow of the Egyptians, might be spread far and wide among the nations. But in all this, there is not one word either said or implied, about Pharaoh being created, or even "raised up," expressly that God might display his power in his eternal destruction. The design was, according to the plain declaration of Scripture, not that God "might show his power" in the eternal destruction of Pharaoh, but in the "declaring of his own name throughout all the earth." Thus we see, then, that this first position of Calvinism in neither of its branches finds any support in the Bible; but, on the contrary, is fairly disproved.

2. The second position of Calvinism is, *that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was effected by a direct influence or positive influx from God.* This position, on which is based the strength of the Calvinistic argument from the case of Pharaoh, has been assumed, but never has been proved. Indeed, the evidence is very plain to the contrary. There are two senses in which God may be said to harden the hearts of men; and it is probable that this took place in both senses, with Pharaoh and the Egyptians. 1. The first is, by sending them mercies, with the express design that they may be melted into contrition and led to reformation; the natural consequence of which, however, will be, that, if they resist these mercies, they will be left harder and more obdurate than they were before. In this sense it is, that the Gospel is said to be, 2 Cor. ii. 16, "in them that perish, a savor of death unto death;" and, Rom. ii. 4, 5, the ungodly are said to "despise the riches of the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering" of God, and "after their hardness and impenitent hearts," to treasure up "wrath against the day of wrath." And in the same sense, the Lord "endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath;" that is, he waited long with the Egyptians, and delivered and "raised them up" from many plagues, that they might see "his power," and be led to own his dominion. 2. The second sense in which God may be said to harden the hearts of men, is that of a judicial dereliction, or a righteous withholding of his restraining grace. This takes place after men have had a fair trial, been faithfully warned, and long borne with; and is not effected by any active exertion of divine power upon them, or any positive infusion of evil into them, but results, necessarily, from God's ceasing to send them his prophets and ministers, and withholding from them his Holy Spirit. The remarks of Macknight on this subject deserve special regard.

“ If this is understood of nations, God’s hardening them means his allowing them an opportunity of hardening themselves, by exercising patience and long-suffering towards them. ‘ This was the way God hardened Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Ex. vii. 3. ‘ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.’ For when God removed the plagues one after another, the Egyptians took occasion from that respite to harden their own hearts. So it is said, Ex. viii. 15, ‘ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said.’ See Ex. viii. 32. If the expression ‘ whom he will he hardeneth,’ is understood of individuals, it does not mean that God hardens their hearts by any positive exertions of his power upon them, but that by his not executing sentence against their evil works speedily, he allows them to go on in their wickedness, whereby they harden themselves. And when they have proceeded to a certain length, he withholds the warnings of prophets and righteous men, and even withdraws his Spirit from them, according to what he declared concerning the antediluvians, Gen. vi. 3. ‘ My Spirit shall not always strive with man.’ The examples of Jacob and Esau, and of the Israelites and the Egyptians, are very properly appealed to by the apostle on this occasion, to show that without injustice God might punish the Israelites for their disobedience by casting them off, and make the believing Gentiles his people in their place.”

Hence, it is clearly evident that from the Scriptures we have no ground for believing that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh by a direct influence, and positive infusion of evil; and, therefore, the second position of Calvinism falls to the ground.

3. The third position of the Calvinist, which we proposed examining, is, *that in the reference to the parable of the potter, the making of “ one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor,” is designed to represent the right of God to create one man expressly for eternal life, and another for eternal destruction.*

This position contains the very essence of the Calvinistic peculiarity. If it can be sustained, there is nothing left between Calvinism and Arminianism worthy of contention; but if it cannot be sustained, then it will follow that this hackneyed argument of the Calvinist, drawn from the parable of “ the potter and the clay,” is “ weighed in the balances and found wanting.” Now we think that it is only necessary to examine carefully the entire passage in Jeremiah, from which the apostle quotes, in order to see that it has no reference whatever to the eternal destiny of individuals. The whole passage reads thus:—Jer. xviii. 1—10. “ The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my

words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O *house of Israel*, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O *house of Israel*. At what instant I shall speak concerning a *nation*, and concerning a *kingdom*, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a *nation*, and concerning a *kingdom*, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." In regard to this parable, we may observe, 1. It has no reference to the creation of individual persons; but to God's sovereign dominion over nations or kingdoms. God does not say, "at what time I shall speak concerning" an individual person; but "concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom." 2. It has no reference to the eternal destiny of men; but to the overthrow or prosperity of kingdoms in this world. The language is "to pull down and to destroy,"—that is, to overturn the polity, or destroy the power of a nation as such; or "to build and to plant;"—that is, to establish, strengthen, and prosper an earthly kingdom. 3. This calamity and prosperity are not presented as the result of the mere arbitrary will of God, absolute and unconditional, but it is clearly expressed that they are conditional;—subject to be influenced by the conduct of the nations referred to. 4. It is not intimated that the potter made even the "vessel unto dishonor," expressly to destroy it. The reverse of this is most certainly true. Although all vessels are not designed for a purpose of equal honor or importance, yet none are formed merely to be "dashed in pieces." 5. The potter did not change his design in making the vessel, so as to form it "another vessel," which we may suppose to be a "vessel unto dishonor," till it first "was marred" in his hand. It failed to answer his first intention. 6. This whole parable was designed to express God's sovereign right to deal with the Jews as seemed good in his sight. Not to prosper or destroy them according to an arbitrary will; but to govern them according to the fixed principles of his righteous administration. To permit them to be carried into captivity when they became wicked and rebellious, and to restore them to their own land and to their former prosperity when they repented. 7. As this parable was originally used to justify the dealings of God in reference to the Jewish nation in the days of Jeremiah, so it was strikingly illustrative of the justice of God in destroying the idola

trous Pharaoh and the Egyptians, after having long borne with them; and it was also well adapted to show the propriety of God's rejecting the unbelieving Jews from being his church, and receiving into its pale the believing Gentiles, in the apostle's day; and this was the very subject which the apostle was considering. From all this we arrive at the conclusion, that, so far from this parable being designed to teach an unconditional and absolute election and reprobation of individuals to eternal life and eternal death, it is only intended to exhibit a conditional election and reprobation of nations, in reference to the present world. And thus we perceive that this third position of Calvinism, in reference to the subject before us, is plainly contradicted by the Scriptures.

4. The fourth position of Calvinism which we proposed to consider, is, *that the "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" are designed to represent persons expressly and designedly created and prepared by the Almighty for eternal death.* The comment of Calvinists generally on this subject is, that God not only determined from all eternity to sentence a portion of mankind to eternal death, but that he preordained the means as well as the end. Hence those who by the decree of God are designed for eternal death, are, by the same decree inevitably operating in their case, "fitted" or prepared for their unalterable and unavoidable destiny.

The manner in which many Calvinists speak in reference to this dark feature of their system is a little curious. Some, like the bold and independent Calvin himself, look it full in the face, and frankly confess that "it is a horrible decree," whilst others conduct themselves warily, and neither directly avow, nor plainly deny the consequences of their doctrine; but at the same time indirectly evince that even in this matter they are Calvinists still. The controversy in reference to the phrase "fitted to destruction," regards the agency by which this is effected. On this passage Prof. Stuart remarks: "Now, whether they came to be fitted merely by their own act, or whether there was some agency on the part of God which brought them to be fitted, the text of itself does not here declare. But in our text how can we avoid comparing *κατηρησμένα*, in verse 22, with *ἡ προητοιμάσασε*, in verse 23? The two verses are counterparts and antithetic;—and accordingly we have *σκεύη ὀργῆς*, to which *σκεύη ἔλεους* corresponds, and so *εἰς ἀπωλείαν* and *εἰς δόξαν*. How can we help concluding, then, that *κατηρησμένα* and *ἡ προητοιμάσασε* correspond in the way of antithesis?" Although there is here apparent some reserve in the mode of expression, yet the clear inference is, that, according to Prof. Stuart, there is a perfect antithesis between the "vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction," in the 22d verse, and "the vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory," in the 23d verse: and that God exercised a similar

agency in both cases. That is, that God not only directly prepares his people for eternal life, but that he directly fitteth the wicked for eternal death. We may suppose, however, that if the learned Professor had not felt some concern for the cause of Calvinism, he might have told us that it is not necessary in every case where antithesis is used, that the figure should be applied to every part of the subject. There may be antithesis between the "vessels of wrath" and the "vessels of mercy;" but it does not follow that both must have been fitted or prepared in the same way. Indeed, the very opposite of this is fairly inferable from the language itself. The "vessels of mercy" are said to have been "afore prepared unto glory" by the Lord; but the "vessels of wrath" are merely said to be "fitted unto destruction."—It is not said by whom. Hence, the plain inference is, that, as God is expressly said to be the agent in preparing "the vessels of mercy," had he also been the agent in fitting the "vessels of wrath," a similar form of speech would have been used in both cases. To suppose that God exercises a direct agency in "fitting" men for destruction, is contrary to the scope of this passage, which declares that he "endured with much long-suffering" these "vessels of wrath;" and also at war with the general tenor of Scripture, which, in the language of Mr. Fletcher, represents "salvation to be of God, and damnation to be of ourselves." Hence, we find that this fourth position of Calvinism is contrary to the Scriptures.

5. The last position of the Calvinist which we proposed to consider, is, *that the object of the apostle, in referring to the case of Pharaoh and to the parable of the potter and the clay, was to illustrate the doctrine of personal, unconditional, and eternal election and reprobation.* That the apostle had quite a different object in view we think is plain from the whole connection. It was national and not personal election and reprobation of which he was speaking. This is evident from the 24th verse of the chapter which we have been considering. "Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." The object of the apostle was to silence the objecting Jew, and to justify the Divine procedure in the establishing of the gospel church, of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. Hence it is plain that the entire argument of the Calvinist, for personal and unconditional election and reprobation, from the Epistle to the Romans, is founded on a misapplication of the whole subject;—applying what is said of nations to individuals, and what is said in reference to time to eternity. The apostle continues the discussion of this national election throughout the tenth and eleventh chapters; but to follow him further we deem unnecessary, as the principles already presented and established will sufficiently illustrate the whole subject. We thought it only necessary to examine the passage mainly relied

upon by the Calvinist; and the result is, that we find therein no support for Calvinian election and reprobation.

III. The third and last Scripture argument relied upon by the Calvinist, which we shall here notice, is founded upon what is said in reference to predestination, &c., in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the eighth chapter to the Romans. The passages read as follow:—Eph. i. 4, 5, 11, 12. “According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”—“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.” Rom. viii. 28—30. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Perhaps no word in the whole range of theology has given rise to a greater degree of intricate speculation and ardent controversy, than the word predestinate, which occurs in the above passages. The words here rendered “did predestinate,” and “having predestinated,” in the Greek Testament, are *προωρίσασε* and *προορίσας*, and are derived from *προ*, before, and *ορίζω*, I define, finish, bound, or terminate. Hence we have the English word horizon from *ὅρος*, a boundary, or limit. The literal import of predestinate is, therefore, *to define, describe, limit, or fix the boundaries beforehand*. In the language of Calvinists, predestination is a term of more extensive import than election. By the latter, they understand the Divine selection from all eternity of a portion of mankind for eternal life; by the former, they understand not only the predetermination of the elect for eternal life, but also the preordaining of the reprobate to eternal death; and in a still wider sense, they understand it to mean God’s eternal decree, by which he “hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

The Arminians, although they discard predestination in the absolute and unconditional sense of the Calvinists, yet acknowledge that there is a sense in which it is a true doctrine of revelation.

1. They understand by predestination, the Divine predetermination in reference to nations. Thus they hold that the Jews were predestinated to be the church of God, under the Old Testament dispensation;

and that, under the gospel, it was predestinated, that the church should consist of both Jews and Gentiles, admitted on the condition of faith.

2. By predestination, they understand the Divine predetermination to save the believing character, as declared in the gospel.

3. By predestination, they understand the Divine predetermination to save all persons who will believe the gospel, upon the condition of persevering faith. Here, then, are three different senses in which Arminians admit that predestination may scripturally be understood. The first relates to nations or bodies of people; the second relates to certain characters; and the third relates to individuals conditionally. As the last is the only view of the subject in which the eternal destiny of individual persons is embraced, and as that is conditional, it follows, that predestination in any of these acceptations is essentially variant from the Calvinistic theory. The three essential attributes of Calvinian predestination are, 1. That it relate to individual persons. 2. That it be unconditional;—not dependent on the foresight of faith and obedience, or unbelief and disobedience. 3. That it relate to the eternal destiny of men. Now it will be perceived that all these attributes meet in no one of the views presented as held by Arminians. National predestination, and that which relates to certain characters, may be unconditional; but here the eternal destiny of individuals is not fixed. Personal predestination, which alone fixes the destiny of individuals, is always understood by the Arminian as being conditional;—founded upon the Divine prescience, which fully contemplates and strictly regards the condition of faith and good works, as presented in the gospel.

We will now inquire, briefly, whether the Calvinian or Arminian view of this subject accords with the above quoted Scriptures.

1. We notice the passage in Ephesians. This, Dr. Macknight, a Calvinist, acknowledges is a national predestination, (though he still contends for a higher meaning.) And that it refers especially to the calling of the Gentiles to the fellowship of the gospel, is evident from the entire scope of the epistle. In continuation of the same subject, the apostle proceeds, and in the third chapter, speaks of the “mystery” that was “made known to him by revelation,” and this he defines to be, “that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;” and he adds, that this is “according to the eternal purpose which he (God) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here, then, is the plain comment by the apostle himself, on the import of the “predestination” and “the mystery of God’s will,” according to his good pleasure, purposed in himself, which were spoken of in the first chapter. If it still be contended, as Mack-

night thinks it should, that there is a reference here to personal predestination to eternal life, the fact is not denied; although the national predestination of the Gentiles is the point directly referred to by the apostle, yet this always contemplated, and was designed to promote the eternal salvation of individuals. But the moment we contemplate it as personal predestination to eternal life, it becomes conditional. The Gentiles were only embraced in this sense as they became believers, and upon the condition of their faith. This is plain from the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the first chapter. "That we should be to the praise of his glory who *first trusted in Christ*. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth." So we perceive that in no sense in which the subject can be viewed, is any countenance here given to the Calvinian version of predestination.

Equally difficult will it be found to construe the passage in the eighth chapter to the Romans according to Calvinistic principles. Arminians have differed somewhat in the construction of this passage. Dr. Clarke seems to confine it to the national call of the Gentiles to gospel fellowship; in this, he followed the comment of Taylor. But Mr. Watson thinks personal election to eternal life is here embraced. We think that both national and personal predestination are included.

1. The Gentiles, as a people, because God foreknew that they would believe and embrace the gospel, were predestinated to the enjoyment of its privileges.
2. Genuine and persevering believers, because God foreknew them as such, were predestinated to be "conformed to the image of his Son." They were "called, justified, and glorified." But all this was conducted according to the regular gospel plan. Their predestination was founded upon the foreknowledge of God, which contemplated them as complying with the condition of faith as laid down in the gospel. Here, then, we can see no ground at all for the Calvinian notion of absolute and unconditional election, or predestination to eternal life, irrespective of faith or good works. We have now briefly examined those texts which have ever been considered as the strongholds of Calvinism; and think we have clearly shown that they are susceptible of a different and much more consistent interpretation. There are other passages which they frequently urge in support of their doctrine; but we deem it useless to detain longer. We have selected the principal and most difficult; and from the solutions already furnished, the proper explanation of others will be readily presented, in perfect consistency with a *possible salvation for all mankind*.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XVII.

- QUESTION 1. Upon what Scripture do the Calvinists found their *first* argument which is here noticed?
2. What commentators are named as having refuted the Calvinistic construction of this passage?
 3. What Calvinistic commentators are named as having favored the Arminian construction?
 4. Upon what two positions is the Calvinistic argument here dependent?
 5. How is it proved that this election and reprobation did not refer to Jacob and Esau *personally*?
 6. How does it appear that it did not refer to the *eternal destiny* of those concerned?
 7. Upon what passage is the *second* Calvinistic argument here noticed, founded?
 8. What are the several positions here presented as essential to sustain the Calvinistic argument from this passage?
 9. How is the first position disproved?
 10. How the second?
 11. The third?
 12. The fourth?
 13. The fifth?
 14. Upon what is founded the *third* Calvinistic argument here noticed?
 15. What is the literal meaning of *predestinate*?
 16. In what sense do Calvinists understand this doctrine?
 17. How is it understood by Arminians?
 18. What is the essential difference between *Calvinistic* and *Arminian* predestination?
 19. How is it shown that the texts quoted accord with the Arminian theory?
 20. Have Arminians all agreed in their explanation of the passage quoted from Rom. 8th chapter?
 21. What is the probable meaning of that passage?
 22. Are there any other passages appealed to by Calvinists?
 23. Are they more difficult than the ones selected?
 24. Upon what principle may they be explained?

LECTURE XVIII.

CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM COMPARED.

HAVING progressed so far in the investigation of the extent of the atonement, as, first, to consider the Scripture testimony in favor of the Arminian view, and, secondly, to examine some of the principal Scripture proofs relied upon by Calvinists for the establishment of their system, we would now proceed to institute a comparison between Calvinism and Arminianism, by an examination of the leading difficulties with which each of these systems has been said, by the opposite party, to be encumbered.

1. We will notice the principal objections which Calvinists have alleged against the system of Arminianism. The following are all that we deem worthy of consideration.

1. Calvinists allege that *Arminianism is contrary to FACT.*
2. *That it is contrary to GRACE.*
3. *That it is inconsistent with the DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.*

These difficulties we will present in the language of Dr. Hill, as follows:—

“1. It does not appear agreeable to fact that there is an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance.

“2. The second difficulty under which the Arminian system labors is this, that while in words it ascribes all to the grace of God, it does in effect resolve our salvation into something independent of that grace.

“3. This system seems to imply a failure in the purpose of the Almighty, which is not easily reconciled with our notions of his sovereignty.”

The three difficulties above specified are more fully expressed by the same author in another place, as follow:—

“1. It is not easy to reconcile the infinite diversity of situations, and the very unfavorable circumstances, in which many nations, and some individuals of all nations, are placed, with one fundamental position of the Arminian system, that to all men there are administered means sufficient to bring them to salvation.

"2. It is not easy to reconcile those views of the degeneracy of human nature, and those lessons of humility and self-abasement in the sight of God, which both Scripture and reason inculcate, with another fundamental position of that system, that the faith and good works of those who are elected did not flow from their election, but were foreseen by God as the grounds of it.

"3. It is not easy to reconcile the immutability and efficacy of the Divine counsel, which enter into our conceptions of the First Cause, with a purpose to save all, suspended upon a condition which is not fulfilled with regard to many."—(Hill's Lectures, ch. 9, sec. 1, and ch. 7, sec. 4.)

We know of no difficulty urged by Calvinists, as involved in the Arminian view of the extent of the atonement, meriting a serious reply, which may not properly be embraced under one or the other of the above divisions. The difficulties above described, it must be confessed, are of so grave a character, that a clear demonstration of their real existence must be a sufficient refutation of the system to which they adhere. The system of revealed truth is perfectly consistent throughout, and completely harmonious with the correct view of the Divine attributes. If, then, it can be satisfactorily shown that the Arminian system really labors under either of the above difficulties, however plausible the arguments for its support may have appeared, we will be compelled to renounce it. But we think a close examination of the subject will evince that the above objections are entirely groundless. We will examine them separately.

1. The first alleges that the Arminian system is contrary to fact. The great distinguishing feature of Arminianism, as has been exhibited in the preceding lectures, is a belief in the truth of the following position:—that the atonement of Christ so extends to all men as to render their salvation attainable. That this is inconsistent with fact, is argued, by the Calvinist, both from the supposed destitution of the means of grace in heathen lands, and from the great inequality in the distribution of those means in those countries where the gospel is published.

First, we will consider the subject in reference to the case of the heathen. We think it must be clear, that the objection to a possible salvation for all men, as deduced from the condition of the heathen, can only be sustained upon the supposition that the destitution of their condition is such as to render their salvation utterly impossible. Hence, Calvinists have generally, so far as they have expressed an opinion upon this subject at all, consigned the entire mass of the heathen world to inevitable destruction. That this bold stand is assumed by all Calvinists, cannot be affirmed; for many of them hesitate to express any opinion

on the subject, and others clearly intimate that there may be, even among the heathen, some elect individuals, upon whose hearts divine grace may, in some incomprehensible manner, so operate as effectually to call and prepare them for glory. But then it must be plain, that such as assume this ground can charge upon the system of Arminianism no inconsistency with fact, in relation to the heathen, that does not pertain equally to their own system. As, therefore, the objection itself rests upon the assumed position that the heathen are necessarily precluded from the possibility of salvation, it is an obvious begging of the question. The very position upon which it depends for all its force, is what is denied, and ought first to be proved. But what entirely destroys the objection, is, that this position never has been, and never can be, proved. In relation to the heathen, we may freely admit,—1. That their privileges are far inferior to those conferred upon nations favored with the light of the gospel; and, 2. That this national distinction is fairly attributable to Divine sovereignty, which, for wise and inscrutable reasons, may dispense peculiar blessings, in an unequal degree, to different nations and communities, and even to different individuals. But the great question is, does it follow, from this inequality in the distribution of privilege, that the least favored are entirely destitute of a sufficiency of grace to render their salvation possible? This none can with safety affirm. In reference even to the heathen, the Scriptures declare that God “left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave” them “rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling” their “hearts with food and gladness.” Acts xiv. 17. And again, in the first chapter to the Romans, St. Paul informs us, in reference to the heathen, that “that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” And in Romans, second chapter, we read, “For there is no respect of persons with God. * * * * For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.” In the first chapter of St. John, Christ is said to be “the true Light, which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world.*” And St. Peter declares, Acts x. 34, 35, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in *every nation* he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.” Thus, we clearly see, that, according to

the Scriptures, the heathens themselves are not left destitute of a possibility of salvation.

But the Calvinist may rejoin, that, notwithstanding the Scriptures show forth a possible salvation for the heathen, this does not reconcile the facts in their case with the principles of Arminianism; for, still, it must be admitted that they are far less favored, in point of privilege, than Christian nations. To which we would reply, that it follows, at least, from the possibility of salvation to the heathen, that the objection under consideration falls to the ground; for it rests for its support on the assumed position, "that it does not appear agreeable to fact that there is an administration of the means of grace sufficient to bring all men to faith and repentance." The point upon which the objection stands or falls, is, not the equality or inequality in the means of grace, but the sufficiency or insufficiency of those means to eventuate in salvation. That such a sufficiency of the means of grace extends to the heathen, we have seen from the Scriptures. Hence, the assumed fact, by which the Calvinist would involve the Arminian system in difficulty, is shown to be contrary to Scripture. But, if we confine ourselves to the bare inequality in the distribution of the means of grace, Calvinism, as well as Arminianism, is compelled to admit this inequality, even in reference to the elect; for it is undeniable that some of them are much more highly favored than others. If, then, a bare inequality in the distribution of the means of grace is evidence that God does not intend the salvation of the less favored, it would follow, that, according to Calvinism, he does not intend the salvation of some of the elect! But if Calvinism did not recognize this inequality, it could involve the Arminian in no difficulty for which he is not furnished with a scriptural solution. The Bible illustration of the subject is, that God will require of men according to what they have, and not according to what they have not. If to the heathen only "one talent" has been disbursed, the improvement of "five" will never be required at their hands. It matters not, so far as the supposed difficulty now under consideration is concerned, whether the means of grace extended to the heathen be explained to mean the teachings of tradition, the light of nature, or the secret influence of the Spirit; or whether all these are thought to be connected. Nor does it at all matter how great or how small the degree of faith, or what the character of the obedience, essential to the salvation of a heathen. These are questions which cannot affect the point in hand. That a heathen cannot believe the gospel in the same sense, and to the same extent, as a Christian, may readily be admitted; but this cannot affect the question concerning the possibility of their salvation, unless it first be proved that the same is required of them, which is a position alike repugnant to rea-

son and to Scripture. We hence conclude, that, so far as the case of the heathen is concerned, there is no evidence that Arminianism is inconsistent with fact.

But Dr. Hill also urges this objection from "the very unequal circumstances in which the inhabitants of different Christian countries are placed." Some have the gospel in greater purity than others, and, in many respects, are more highly favored. Perhaps it is a sufficient reply to this objection to say, that it bears with equal force upon Calvinism. Indeed, it is a little surprising that it did not occur to the learned author above quoted, that this same inequality, which he here adduces as a fact to disprove a possible salvation for all men, would, upon the same principle, prove far more than he would desire:—it would prove the impossibility of the salvation of some of the elect. If this inequality of circumstance, in reference to different Christian countries, and different individuals in the same country, were invariably found to preponderate in favor of the Calvinistically elect, there might seem more propriety in the objection; but such is evidently not the case. Will the Calvinists affirm that all the elect of God are found in those portions of Christendom which are favored with the gospel in its greatest purity? Or will they pretend that the electing grace of God always searches out the most highly privileged individuals in the same community? Surely not. It is admitted, that, while many in the most highly favored countries, and of the most highly favored individuals, in point of external privilege, live and die reprobate sinners, there are to be found in the darkest corners of Christendom, and among the least distinguished individuals in point of external privilege, some of the faithful elect children of God. If, then, this inferiority in point of privilege, which applies to some of the elect when compared with their more highly distinguished brethren, argues nothing against the possibility of the salvation of all the elect, by what mode of reasoning is it that a similar inequality amongst mankind, or Christian nations in general, is appealed to as a fact inconsistent with a possibility of salvation for all men? That the inequality appealed to by Dr. Hill is precisely the same when applied to the elect people of God as when applied to mankind in general, is so obvious a truth, that it is astonishing that a discerning mind should glance at the subject without perceiving it, and, when perceived, it is still more astonishing that this inequality of circumstance should be cited as one of the peculiar difficulties of Arminianism.

Dr. Hill next argues that Arminianism is irreconcilable with the fact, "that amongst those to whom the gospel is preached, and in whose circumstances there is not that kind of diversity which can account for the difference, some believe and some do not believe."

This diversity, Calvinists infer, results entirely from "an inward discriminating grace." But this we view as a gratuitous assumption, uncountenanced by Scripture ; while the Arminian method of accounting for the faith of some, and the unbelief of others, by resolving it into the free agency of man, and making the unbelief of the one result entirely from the wilful rejection of a sufficient degree of grace to eventuate in saving faith, presents a solution of the difficulty at once satisfactory and consistent with the general tenor of the gospel.

2. "The second difficulty under which," it is said, "the Arminian system labors, is this : that, while in words it ascribes all to the grace of God, it does in effect resolve our salvation into something independent of that grace." From the days of Calvin to the present time, the term grace has been pronounced with a peculiar emphasis, and dwelt upon as a hobby, by those who have borne the name of Calvinists. They have designated their own peculiar views of predestination, election, divine sovereignty, &c., by the imposing title of "doctrines of grace ;" and all who have differed from them on this subject have been characterized, by them at least, as enemies of salvation by grace, and abettors of salvation by works. But that the "doctrines of grace," scripturally understood, belong peculiarly to Calvinism, is a position which Arminians have always denied, while they have disavowed most strenuously the doctrine of salvation by works. Indeed, none who acknowledge the Bible as their standard can deny the position, that salvation is of grace, and not of works. The important point is, to ascertain the Bible import of the doctrines of grace, and to determine the sense in which salvation is not of works, but of grace. If the system of Arminianism really involves the inconsistency imputed to it in the above named objection, it cannot be true. The objection represents, that, "while in words it ascribes all to the grace of God, it does in effect resolve our salvation into something independent of that grace." Now, it is clear that our salvation cannot be all ascribed to grace, and at the same time, and in the same sense, be all ascribed to, or "resolved into, something independent of that grace," without a manifest contradiction. If it be meant, that Arminianism plainly contradicts itself, by representing salvation to be, at the same time and in the same sense, in words, of grace, and in effect, of something else, it should be shown in what sense it is represented to be of grace, and that, in the same sense, it is represented to be of something else ; and then the inconsistency would be fairly proved upon the system itself ; but this Dr. Hill has not attempted to do. We are, therefore, induced to believe, that we are not to infer from the objection that one part of Arminianism is inconsistent with another part of the same system, but only that it is inconsistent with Calvinism. Unless the prem-

ises in the objection, as stated by Dr. Hill, are utterly false and good for nothing, we must understand the language to imply, that while Arminianism ascribes salvation to grace in the Arminian acceptation of the term, in the Calvinistic sense it ascribes it to something else. Then the only controversy will be, whether the Calvinian or the Arminian view of the sense in which salvation is of grace, is in accordance with the Scriptures. That salvation is of grace in the sense in which that term may be explained by Calvinists, is, perhaps, more than Arminians can admit, either in words or in effect. For if by salvation of grace Calvinists understand that faith and obedience have no connection whatever with salvation, either as conditions or otherwise, this view of salvation by grace must be rejected by Arminians, as directly contradictory to the Scriptures. And this, we are persuaded, is the sense in which salvation by grace is understood, when it is said that the Arminian system does, in effect, deny it. If the Scriptures are true, salvation cannot be of grace in such sense as to be entirely irrespective of repentance and faith, and to supersede the necessity of good works. The plain difference between Calvinism and Arminianism, on this subject, is this: Calvinists cannot see how salvation can be entirely of grace, if it have any respect to faith, or anything else, as a condition; whereas, Arminians, while they understand that "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," are indispensable conditions of salvation, with all to whom the gospel is addressed, understand, at the same time, that salvation itself is entirely, from beginning to end, a work of God through grace. If it still be insisted, that salvation cannot be ascribed to grace if it be suspended upon a condition, then the charge of inconsistency or heterodoxy must be made upon the Bible itself; for nothing can be plainer than that God has promised to save the believer upon the condition of faith, and threatened to punish the unbeliever in consequence of his unbelief and voluntary rejection of the gospel. Notwithstanding salvation is thus suspended upon conditions, and, in a certain sense, man, by his own agency, must determine his eternal destiny; yet, it may easily be shown that salvation itself is all the work of God through grace.

(1.) Man is by nature utterly helpless, incapable of any good whatever, only as he is visited and strengthened by Divine grace.

(2.) It is attributable to grace alone that a plan of mercy has been devised and proposed to man.

(3.) Nothing that man can do can avail anything toward purchasing salvation by merit; for "when we have done all that we can do, we are unprofitable servants."

(4.) The work of salvation, in all its stages, can be performed, either in whole or in part, by none but God; and this is entirely a work of grace; for none can claim it at the hand of God as a matter of right, and it is

of his mere grace that God has promised to save the sinner, according to the plan of his own devising. This subject may be illustrated by a reference to the case of the man with the "withered hand." He had no strength to lift his hand, yet in his effort to obey the command strength was imparted. Now, none can certainly say, that, if he had refused to obey the command, his hand would have been restored, and yet, how absurd would it have been for him to have boasted that his cure was of himself, merely because the Saviour saw proper to effect the work in a certain way, and the man received the benefit in accordance with that plan! Even so, if God see proper to save one man and to damn another, under the dispensation of his gospel, it will be because the one accepted and the other rejected the gospel message; and still, the work of salvation will be a work of God through grace. Thus, we think it clear, that there is no just ground to impugn the Arminian system as being inconsistent with the doctrines of grace.

3. The last difficulty alleged against the Arminian system is, "*that it proceeds upon the supposition of a failure of the purpose of the Almighty,*" which is irreconcilable with the DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

That God is an independent sovereign, and governs the material and moral universe according to his will, is a truth so fully developed in Scripture, and so conformable to our best conceptions of the Divine character, that no system of divinity which denies it can be admitted as true. Calvinists have generally represented Arminians as denying the Divine sovereignty; but Arminians, so far from acknowledging that they deny this doctrine, have ever contended that their system recognizes it, in a more scriptural and consistent acceptation than the Calvinistic theory admits. That Arminianism is inconsistent with the Calvinistic presentation of that doctrine, will not be denied; but the question is, can the Arminian system be reconciled with the correct and scriptural view of the subject? We think it can.

The point in reference to which Dr. Hill alleges that Arminianism is inconsistent with the sovereignty of God, is, that, according to the Arminian system, the will of God is absolutely defeated; for in that system it is declared that God wills the salvation of all men, but if, as Arminians admit, all men are not saved, then, according to the objection, the Divine will is defeated, and the sovereign dominion of God is overthrown. This difficulty, which, indeed, at first view, wears a formidable aspect, upon a closer examination will be seen to originate entirely in a misunderstanding of the import of the term *will*; or, rather, from the use of the term in two different senses. For illustration of these two acceptations of the will, the one may be termed the primary or antecedent will of God, and the other his ultimate will. The primary or antecedent will

of God contemplates and recognizes the contingencies necessarily connected with the actions of free moral agents ; but the ultimate will of God is absolute and unencumbered by any conditions whatever. Thus, it is the primary or antecedent will of God that all men should be saved ; but it is the ultimate will of God that none shall be saved but those who comply with the conditions of salvation. The question will here be asked, has then God two wills, the one inconsistent with the other ? We reply, no ; there is really but one will, contemplated in two different points of view ; and the terms antecedent and ultimate are merely used for the convenience of describing two different but perfectly consistent aspects of the same will, under different circumstances. This may be familiarly illustrated by the analogy of parental government. The father prescribes a law for his children, and threatens chastisement to all who disobey. Now it is very clear that the affectionate father does not primarily will that any of his children should suffer chastisement. It is his desire that all should obey, and escape punishment. But some of them disobey ; the will of the father is, that they be chastised according to his threatening. This is necessary in order to the maintenance of his authority. But we demand, has any change really taken place in the will of the father ? Surely not. Is not his ultimate will, which orders the punishment, perfectly consistent with his primary will, which desired not the punishment of any ? Or, rather, is it not the same will, under a different modification ? The perfect consistency, or, more strictly, the identity of the primary and ultimate will, may be clearly seen by advert- ing to the conditionality of the primary will, necessarily resulting from the principles of government suited to moral agents. Thus, the father primarily willed that none of his children should be punished. This is his first desire, flowing from the benevolence of his nature. But he does not will this absolutely and unconditionally. He only wills it conditionally. That is, he wills that they should escape punishment only in a certain way,—by obeying his law ; but if they violate his law, his will is that they consequently be punished. Let it be remembered, also, that the primary will or desire of the parent is not in the least weakened by the strength of his apprehension that some of his children will, in the abuse of their agency, disobey, and incur the penalty. Indeed, if the mind of the father should fix upon one more refractory than the rest, his affection would naturally desire more ardently the obedience, and consequent escape, of that child. Now, it must be confessed, that the affection of an earthly parent, though exceedingly ardent, is but a faint representation of the extent of the love and compassion of God for all his intelligent creatures. But, yet, the illustration thus presented may aptly serve the purpose for which we have used it. The primary will

of God is, that all men should be saved. This he has most solemnly declared, and the benevolence of his holy nature requires it. But he does not thus will absolutely and unconditionally. He only wills it according to certain conditions, and in consistency with the plan of his own devising. He wills their salvation, not as stocks or stones, but as moral agents. He wills their salvation through the use of the prescribed means; but if, in the abuse of their agency, they reject the gospel, his ultimate will is that they perish for their sins. This is essential to the maintenance of his moral government over his creatures. Thus we may clearly see how the Almighty can, according to the system of Arminianism, primarily will the salvation of all men, and through the atonement of Christ render it attainable, and yet maintain his absolute sovereignty over the moral universe. But it is not the sovereignty of an arbitrary tyrant, nor yet such a sovereignty as that by which he rules the material universe, according to principles of absolute and fatal necessity, but the sovereignty of a righteous and benevolent Governor of moral and intelligent agents, according to holy and gracious principles. If this be the sovereignty for which Dr. Hill and the Calvinists contend, they can find nothing in the system of Arminianism inconsistent therewith; but a sovereignty variant from this would not only be inconsistent with Arminianism, but it would be repugnant to Scripture, and derogatory to the Divine character.

We have now briefly considered the three leading difficulties under which, according to Calvinists, the Arminian system labors; and we think we have shown that they are all susceptible of a rational and satisfactory solution.

II. We shall now briefly sketch some of the principal, and, as we think, unanswerable objections to the Calvinistic system. That we may more clearly perceive the force of these objections, it will be necessary to keep still in view the great distinguishing principle in the Calvinistic system, viz.,—*That salvation is not made possible to all mankind; and that this impossibility depends not upon the Divine foresight of the conduct of men, but upon the eternal decree and inscrutable will of God.*

That this is a correct presentation of the Calvinistic scheme, has been abundantly shown in the preceding lectures. But we think that, notwithstanding the number of learned and pious divines who have exerted their utmost ability and zeal in the support of the above system, they have never succeeded in extricating it from the following weighty objections:—

1. *It is contrary to the prima facie evidence and general tenor of Scripture.* This has been shown,

(1.) By appealing to those numerous and plain declarations of Scrip-

ture, in which, in speaking of the atonement, or of the death of Christ, terms of the widest possible import are used ; such as *all, all the world, all mankind, the whole world, &c.*

(2.) By appealing to those passages which place in direct contrast, Adam, and the extent of the effects of his fall, with Christ, and the extent of the effects of his death.

(3.) By appealing to those passages which teach that Christ died for such as do or may perish.

(4.) By referring to those plain declarations which authorize the preaching of the gospel to all men, and require all men to repent and believe.

(5.) By appealing to those passages which unreservedly offer salvation to *all men*, and declare that men's failure to obtain it is their own fault.

(6.) By referring to those passages which teach the possibility of final apostasy, and warn Christians of their danger of it.

This is only an index to the classes of texts with which the Scriptures are replete upon this subject. Considering their great number, and plain and pointed character, it is clear that they present a *prima facie* evidence in opposition to Calvinism little less than irresistible to the unsophisticated mind. With such a mass of plain Scripture, the most natural and common-sense interpretation of which is against them, Calvinists have ever been trammelled, and have predicated the defence of their system mostly on philosophic speculation and abstract theoretic reasoning.

2. *The Calvinistic system is irreconcilable with the character of man as a free moral agent.* This characteristic of our nature will be fully investigated in another lecture. At present, we assume it, as one among the most plain and undeniable truths of philosophy and religion. Calvinists have generally admitted, that, to reconcile their views of the eternal and absolute decrees of election and reprobation with the free agency of man, is a task too difficult for their finite powers. Hence they have seldom attempted it. Their course on this subject has not been uniform. While some have boldly repudiated the doctrine of man's free agency, and therein battled against common sense itself, the greater portion have contended that the doctrines of the eternal and unconditional decrees, and of man's free agency, though to human comprehension irreconcilable, are nevertheless both true ! and they have referred the solution of the difficulty to the revelations of eternity. If, indeed, the difficulty now before us belonged legitimately to that class of Bible truths which are too profound for human wisdom to fathom, a reference to the developments of eternity would certainly be an appropriate disposition of the subject. But when we consider the true character of the

difficulty in question, it may well be doubted whether such a reference has anything to justify or recommend it, except that it is an easy method of dismissing a troublesome difficulty. What would we say of the individual who would pretend to believe that light and darkness are both the same, and refer to eternity for their reconciliation? Or what would we think of him who would profess to believe in both the following propositions, viz.,—1. Man is accountable to God; 2. Man is not accountable to God; or in any two positions plainly contradictory to each other; and refer to the revelations of eternity for their reconciliation? We think very few would tamely accede to an opponent the right to dispose of such difficulties by that summary and easy process. And with just as little propriety can the Calvinist refer to eternity for the reconciliation of his system with the free agency of man. The doctrines of the eternal and absolute decrees of Calvinism, and the free agency of man, are plainly and directly contradictory; and although their reconciliation is a task too difficult for finite minds, yet a limited capacity may clearly perceive, that, in their very nature, they are absolutely irreconcilable. Nothing can be plainer than that, if all the actions of men are absolutely and unconditionally decreed from all eternity, it is impossible for man to act otherwise than he does. And if man is necessarily determined to act precisely as he does, he cannot be free to act differently; and if so, he cannot be a free agent. It will avail nothing to say that man may act according to his own will or inclination; for if the will be necessarily determined, man can be no more free, though he may act in accordance with that necessary determination, than a falling stone, which moves in accordance with the necessary laws of gravity. As the doctrine of free agency will be more fully discussed hereafter, we will now dismiss this subject, by the single remark, that when two propositions, directly antagonistic to each other, can be harmonized, then, and not till then, may Calvinism and man's free agency be reconciled.

3. *The Calvinistic system is inconsistent with the love or benevolence of God.* "God is love." "He is loving to every man: and his tender mercies are over all his works." It is the nature of the feeling of love to seek the happiness of the object beloved; and if God loves all men, as the Scriptures declare, he will, in his administration towards them, seek to promote their happiness, as far as it can be done consistently with his own perfections and with the character of man. But if one part of mankind have been passed by in the covenant of redemption, and doomed to inevitable destruction, when another portion, equally undeserving, have been selected as the favorites of Heaven, and set apart to eternal happiness, and this distinction, as Calvinists say, is

founded upon the sovereign will of God alone, no reason can be assigned for the salvation of the elect that did not equally exist in reference to the reprobate, unless it be that God willed arbitrarily the salvation of the former, but did not will the salvation of the latter. In willing the salvation of the elect, he necessarily willed their happiness, and in willing the damnation of the reprobate, he necessarily willed their misery. Hence, it follows, that he loved the former, but did not love the latter; and the position, that "God is loving to every man," must be discarded, or Calvinism must be renounced. Thus, it is manifest, that the Calvinistic system is irreconcilable with the love or benevolence of God.

4. *The Calvinistic scheme is inconsistent with the justice of God* No just government can punish an individual for doing what he never had the power to avoid. Such conduct would be universally execrated, as the basest of tyranny. But, according to Calvinism, it is impossible for any man to act differently from what he does. The reprobate never had it in their power to embrace the gospel, or to avoid sinning; therefore, if they are punished for the rejection of the gospel and the commission of sin, they are punished for doing what they never had the power to avoid; and such punishment is not in accordance with justice, but is an infliction of tyranny. Hence, it is clear, that Calvinism is irreconcilable with the justice of God.

5. *The Calvinistic scheme is irreconcilable with the sincerity of God.* To see this, it is only necessary to contemplate the general invitations, commands, and exhortations of the gospel. With what earnestness is it proclaimed, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In reference to the many such invitations and ardent entreaties as are to be found in the Scriptures, it may well be inquired, if Calvinism be true, how can they be the language of sincerity? Can God in sincerity command those to obey, who have no more the power to obey than to make a world? Can he in sincerity offer salvation to those for whom he has never provided it? Can he entreat to "come unto him and be saved," those whom he never designed to save, and whose salvation he knows to be absolutely impossible; and that through no fault of theirs, but by his own eternal decree, according to his sovereign will? Calvinists endeavor, it is true, to reconcile these commands, entreaties, &c., which are addressed alike to all men, with the sincerity of God, by alleging that, if the reprobate have no power to come to Christ and be saved, this results only from a moral inability;

—they are unwilling themselves. But this cannot alter the case, in the least, when it is remembered, that, according to Calvinism, this moral inability can only be removed by the influence of that grace which God has determined to withhold. The numerous subtleties by which Calvinists have endeavored to reconcile their system with the sincerity of God, have made no advance toward removing the difficulty. It may be shifted from one ground to another, but by no artifice can we reconcile with sincerity the offer of salvation to all men, if it is only possible to a few.

6. *The Calvinistic system tends to destroy the distinction between virtue and vice, and to render man an improper subject for future judgment, and for reward or punishment.* Virtue or vice can only exist in man as he is supposed to have the power to do right or wrong, according to his own determination. If, according to the theory of Calvinism, all the actions of men are determined by an absolute and eternal decree of God, so that the virtuous man cannot but be virtuous, and the vicious man cannot but be vicious, virtue and vice, so far as they determine the moral character of men, must be the same. They are both in accordance with, and result from, the will of the Divine sovereign; and flow as impulsively from the eternal decree, which determines the means and the end, as the effect does from the cause. And it necessarily follows, that virtue and vice are essentially the same, and no man can be a proper subject of praise or blame. Again; we look at the solemn process of the general judgment; we see all men assembled at the bar of God, and called to account for all their actions here; and then see the reward of eternal life bestowed upon the righteous, and eternal punishment inflicted on the wicked; and we ask the question, why, according to Calvinism, are men called to account, and rewarded or punished for their actions? If all things were unalterably fixed by the eternal decrees, the judgment process is only an empty show, and no man can be a proper subject either of reward or punishment. For what, we would ask, in view of the Calvinistic theory, can the wicked be punished? If it be said, for their sins, we ask, had they the power to avoid them? If it be said, for their unbelief, we ask, in whom were they required to believe? In a Saviour who never designed or came to save them? Surely, it must be evident, that if salvation never was possible for the reprobate, by no process of reasoning can it be shown to be proper to punish them for their failure to attain unto it. We think, therefore, that it is impossible to reconcile the Calvinistic system with the real distinction between virtue and vice, and with the doctrine of future judgment and rewards and punishments.

We have now noticed some of the leading difficulties with which the

systems of Calvinism and Arminianism have been thought respectively to be encumbered; and in conclusion we would say, that, notwithstanding, according to our showing, Calvinism labors under some very serious difficulties, and leads to some revolting consequences, it likewise embodies much evangelical truth; and the most objectionable consequences which have been deduced from the system have not been fairly acknowledged by all its advocates; yet, as we think they necessarily follow, as logical conclusions, it is but fair that they be plainly presented. We now close our discussion of the extent of the atonement; and would present, as the substance of what we have endeavored to establish, the leading position with which we set out, "*that the atonement so extends to all men as to render salvation possible for them.*"

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XVIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What three leading objections have been urged by Calvinists against Arminianism?</p> <p>2. What is the substance of the answer to the first?</p> <p>3. The second?</p> <p>4. The third?</p> <p>5. What is the first objection to Calvinism, and how is it sustained?</p> <p>6. What is the second, and how is it sustained?</p> | <p>7. What is the third, and how is it sustained?</p> <p>8. What is the fourth, and how is it sustained?</p> <p>9. What is the fifth, and how is it sustained?</p> <p>10. What is the sixth, and how is it sustained?</p> <p>11. What is the substance of what has been established in reference to the extent of the atonement?</p> |
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LECTURE XIX.

THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN.

THE subject now before us, *the moral agency of man*, is one of great interest and importance. It has been said by an excellent writer, that "the proper study of mankind is man." If this be true, as it unquestionably is, when the terms are understood to relate to the true character, moral relations, and eternal destiny of man, it is likewise true that no question ever agitated in relation to man can be of greater interest than the one now proposed,—his proper moral agency.

This subject has elicited a large amount of philosophical research from the most acute metaphysicians in every age of the world, from the earliest date of philosophical science to the present day. It has presented an arena on which the master spirits have met, and wielded with their utmost skill the keenest lance of polemic strife; but perhaps the most that has been written on the subject has tended rather to involve the matter in a maze of metaphysical intricacy, than to present the simple truth in a plain light. Could the public mind be disabused respecting the influence of the fine-spun theories, metaphysical reasonings, and endless quibbles of speculative minds, in reference to free will, moral agency, fixed fate, and philosophical necessity, it might be possible, in a small compass, to present a clear and satisfactory view of the subject in hand. As it is, we cannot feel that we have rendered merited justice without some examination of the various conflicting systems, and puzzling sophisms, which have been so ingeniously invented, and so liberally and tenaciously urged. We shall, however, endeavor, in as clear a method as we can, to exhibit and defend what we conceive to be the true philosophical and scriptural view of man's moral agency.

The numerous and formidable disputants on this subject may all be ranged in two grand divisions:—the advocates of free agency, in the proper sense of the term, on one hand, and the defenders of the doctrine of necessity on the other. That we may conduct the investigation in a clear and profitable manner, great care will be requisite, in the outset, that the terms may be clearly defined, and the real points of difference correctly understood.

I. First, then, we inquire, *what is implied in the free moral agency of man?*

An *agent* means an *actor*. A *moral agent* means an actor *whose actions relate to a rule of right and wrong*. A *free moral agent* means an actor whose actions relate to a rule of right and wrong, and *who is possessed of liberty or freedom in the performance of his actions*.

As regards the simple question of man's agency, we presume there will be no controversy. It is not contended that man is an agent in the sense of absolute independency. In this sense, there is but one agent in the universe, and that is God. He only possesses the power of action, either physical or moral, in an underived and independent sense. Man, and all other created beings, derived this power from the great Creator, and are dependent on him for its continuance. Yet, in the exercise of derived power, they are capable of acting. In this respect, they are contradistinguished from senseless, inanimate matter, which can only move when acted upon by external force. The distinction here presented is so clear and evident, that such as are either destitute of the capacity to perceive it, or of the fairness to acknowledge it, may at once be dismissed from the present investigation.

That man is a moral agent, we think will also be admitted by all who believe in the truth of revelation. The actions of man relate to a rule of right and wrong. He is capable of virtue or vice, and susceptible of blame or praise. This, we believe, all the advocates of necessity, who believe in the Scriptures, readily admit.

The next point in the general definition which we have presented, relates to the freedom or liberty which man possesses in the performance of moral action. Here we find the main point of difference between the defenders of free agency and the advocates of necessity. The former contend, that, in the exercise of his moral agency, man is not under the absolute necessity of acting as he does, but that he might act differently; while the latter contend that all the acts of man are necessary, in such sense that he cannot act differently from what he does. It is true, there is a great difference in the manner in which the advocates of necessity choose to express themselves. Some of them, in words, acknowledge the free moral agency of man, and contend that he possesses freedom in the proper sense of the word. This is the ground assumed by President Edwards, of New Jersey, and his numerous adherents. But by this liberty or freedom they understand that man merely has the power of acting according to his will, or, in other words, that he has the liberty "to do as he pleases." This, they say, is freedom in the highest sense, and the only sense in which man can enjoy it. The definition of liberty as given by Locke, in his famous "Essays on the Human Understand-

ing," is this :—" Liberty is a power to act or not to act, according as the mind directs." Edwards defines it to be, " the power, opportunity, or advantage that one has to do as he pleases." It will readily be perceived, that the meaning of liberty, as given by Locke and Edwards, is the same. On this subject, Edwards borrowed from Locke what the latter had borrowed from Hobbes. It is upon the above definition, with which Edwards sets out, that his entire system is based ; and here, we would say, is the commencement of his grand mistake. He has unfortunately fallen into the common error of the fatalists of every school,—that of confounding the liberty of the mind with the motion of the body. Indeed, the above is neither a correct definition of mental nor *bodily* freedom. It is rather a definition of bodily independence. The power " to act as the mind directs," or " to do as we please," can relate only to bodily action. It presupposes a mental act,—a determination of the will,—but has nothing to do with the power producing that act or determination. Were we for a moment to suppose the definition of liberty above given to relate to mental action connected with the will, we could not vindicate the profound and learned Locke and Edwards from the charge of having gravely presented as an important definition nothing but an insignificant truism. For, surely, to say that we may will " as the mind directs," or " as we please," is the same as to say we may will as we will. But that the above definition, even in the mind of Edwards, had nothing to do with our will, the following quotation will evince. " What is vulgarly called liberty," says Edwards, " namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it ; without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition. In whatever manner a person may come by his choice, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom." From this we may see, that the notion of liberty contended for by Edwards relates to bodily motion, and not to mental action, and is perfectly consistent with the most absolute fatalism.

Again ; the definition of liberty as given by Edwards, as it does not properly apply to mental action, so neither does it properly apply to the power of bodily action as possessed by man. If liberty or freedom means " the power to do as we please," then none but Omnipotence can be free ; for who else " can do as they please ? " How Edwards could contend for the freedom of man, in his sense of freedom, is difficult to conceive ; for surely, a little reflection will show, that, according to that definition, no man can be free. The subject may be illustrated thus :—

Suppose I see an individual exposed to imminent danger from the approach of an enemy, or from the burning of a house over his head. The feelings of humanity instantly lead me to will or desire to save him. I exert my utmost strength, but all in vain. Here, I have not the power "to do as I please." Hence, according to Edwards, in the above case, I cannot possibly be free. I know it may be said that my immediate will is not to save the man, but only to exert myself in that way. To this I reply, that such is evidently not the case. My prime and governing will is to save him. This precedes, and is the cause of, my willing to put forth the exertions. Indeed, if I did not first will to save the man, I never could will to put forth exertions to that effect. The instance already adduced may satisfy any one that no man has the power "to do as he pleases;" and that, consequently, according to Edwards, no man possesses liberty. In this respect, we humbly conceive his definition of freedom implies too much. Freedom does not imply an ability "to do as we please."

But the definition of Edwards is defective in another sense. A man may have the power, in certain cases, "to do as he pleases," and yet not be free. I will illustrate this by a quotation from Mr. Locke. "Liberty cannot be where there is no thought, no volition, no will, &c. So a man striking himself or his friend by a convulsive motion of his arm, which it is not in his power by volition, or the direction of his mind, to stop or forbear; nobody thinks he has liberty in this; every one pities him as acting by necessity and constraint. Again; there may be thought, there may be will, there may be volition, where there is no liberty. Suppose a man be carried, while fast asleep, into a room where is a person he longs to see, and there be locked fast in beyond his power to get out; he awakes, and is glad to see himself in so desirable company, in which he stays so willingly; that is, he prefers his staying to going away. Is not this stay voluntary? I think nobody will doubt it; and yet, being locked fast in, he is not at liberty to stay, he has not freedom to be gone." The example here given by Locke clearly shows that a man may "do as he pleases" while he is fast bound in fetters, and can act in no other way. Consequently, in that case, he cannot enjoy liberty, unless we confound all language, and say that liberty is synonymous with bondage or necessity.

We shall now present a view of freedom taken by Arminian philosophers and divines, which we conceive to be far more consistent with reason and common sense.

1. By a free agent is understood one capable of acting without being necessitated, or efficiently caused to do so, by something else; and he who has this power is properly possessed of liberty.

2. God is a *Free Agent*. It is admitted that God only existed from eternity. Now, as creation was produced by the act of God, when as yet nothing existed but him, it necessarily follows, that he acted uncaused by anything extrinsic to himself; hence, he is a free agent in the sense just given.

3. To say that anything is uncaused, in the proper sense of the word, except God, who only is eternal, is unphilosophical and absurd.

4. Volition in man, not being eternal, must be the effect of some cause; that is, it must result from some power capable of producing it. To say that it is uncaused, or that it is the cause of itself, is absurd.

5. That an agent may act without being efficiently caused to do so by something extrinsic to itself, cannot be denied without denying to God the original power of producing creation.

6. The position, that every act of volition must necessarily be either the effect of an external efficient cause or the effect of a previous act of volition, cannot be sustained without denying that God could originally have produced creation out of nothing. Before he could have exerted creating power, he must have *willed* to do so; and as nothing then existed but himself, that will could not have been the effect of any external efficient cause, but must have been the operation of his own self-active nature. And to deny that God could have created beings endued with self-active power, (in this respect in his own image,) is to deny his omnipotence.

7. The great question on the subject of free agency is, whether man is capable of self-action or not?—not whether he can act independent of God or not, but whether, in the exercise of the power with which God has endued him, he is capable of acting without being necessitated, or efficiently caused to do so, by anything extrinsic to himself?

8. If man be endued with self-active power, then he is a free agent, and properly the author of his own acts; but if he is not thus endued, he is only a passive machine,—as really such as any material substance can be;—no more the author of his actions than a stock or a stone.

In entering upon the discussion of the question of free agency, it is important, in the first place, not only to ascertain clearly the precise matter of dispute, but also to understand the peculiar sense in which any ambiguous terms which custom may have employed in the controversy are used. In addition to the definitions and general principles already presented, we think it necessary to premise a few things relative to certain terms in general use by writers on this subject. First, we remark in reference to the term *Free Will*, that it is not philosophically accurate. Strictly speaking, the *will* is not an agent, but only an attribute or property of an agent; and, of course, freedom, which is also the property

of an agent, cannot be properly predicated of the will. Attributes belong to agents or substances, and not to qualities. Nevertheless, the sense in which the term free will is understood, in this connection, is so clear, that we think it would rather savor of affectation to attempt to lay it aside. The mind or soul of man is the active, intelligent agent to whom pertain the powers or qualities of freedom and volition.

On this point, the writers generally, on both sides in the controversy, have been agreed. President Day says, "It is the man that perceives, and loves, and hates, and acts; not his understanding, or his heart, or his will, distinct from himself."

Prof. Upham defines the will to be, "the mental power or susceptibility by which we put forth volitions." He also says, "The term will is not meant to express anything separate from the mind; but merely embodies and expresses the fact of the mind's operating in a particular way." Stewart defines the will to be, "that power of the mind of which volition is the act."

We would further remark, that, although volition is, in one sense, an effect, yet it is not the passive result of an extrinsic force acting so as to produce it. It is the action of the mind, uncaused by anything external acting efficiently on the mind. It depends simply on the exercise of those powers with which man has been endued, and which have been placed under his control by the Creator.

The great question in this controversy is not whether a man can will "as he pleases," for that is the same as to ask whether he can will as he does will. But the question is, can a man will, without being constrained to will as he does by something extrinsic to himself, acting efficiently upon him? This is the real question on which depends the freedom of the mind in willing.

Again; when we speak of a self-active power of man in willing, we are not to understand that this is a lawless exercise of power. The mind is the efficient agent that wills, but this act is performed according to the laws properly belonging to a self-moving, accountable agent. Motives and external circumstances although they can exercise no active or efficient agency in reference to the will, yet, speaking figuratively, they are properly said to exercise an influence over the mind; that is, they are the conditions or occasions of the mind's action in willing. In this sense, they may be said to influence the will; but this is so far from being an absolute and irresistibly controlling influence, that it is really no proper or efficient influence at all.

The advocates of necessity, in their arguments upon this subject, have generally either not understood, or wilfully misstated, the ground assumed by their opponents. They have generally reasoned upon the assump-

tion that there is no medium between absolute necessity and perfect independency. Whereas, the true doctrine in reference to the freedom of the will, and that assumed by the proper defenders of free agency, is equally aloof from both these extremes. By moral liberty, we neither understand, on the one hand, that the actions of man are so determined by things external to him as to be bound fast with the cords of necessity; nor, on the other hand, so disconnected with surrounding circumstances, and everything external, as to be entirely uninfluenced thereby. The controversy, therefore, between the advocates of necessity, and Arminians, or the defenders of free agency, is not whether man is influenced in his will to any extent by circumstances, motives, &c., or not; but whether his will is thus absolutely and necessarily controlled, so that it could not possibly be otherwise. If the will of man be absolutely and unconditionally fixed by motives and external causes, so that it is obliged to be as it is, then is the doctrine of necessity, as contended for by Edwards and others, true;—but if the will might, in any case, be different from what it is, or if it is to any extent dependent on the self-controlling power with which man is endued, then is the free moral agency of man established, and the whole system of philosophical necessity falls to the ground.

II. We proceed now to consider some of the leading arguments by which the free moral agency of man, as briefly defined above, is established.

1. *We rely upon our own consciousness.* By consciousness, we mean the knowledge we have of what passes within our own minds. Thus, when we are angry, we are sensible of the existence of that feeling within us. When we are joyful, or sad, we know it. When we love or hate, remember or fear, we are immediately sensible of the fact. The knowledge we possess of this nature is not the result of reasoning; it is not derived from an investigation of testimony; but rises spontaneously in the mind. On subjects of this kind arguments are superfluous; for, in reference to things of which we are conscious, no reasoning, or external testimony, can have any influence, either to strengthen our convictions or to cause us to doubt. In vain may you endeavor by argument to persuade the man who feels conscious that his heart is elated with joy that he is, at the same time, depressed with grief. You cannot convince the sick man who is racked with pain that he is in the enjoyment of perfect health; nor the man who exults in the vigor of health and vivacity that he is writhing under the influence of a painful disease. Knowledge derived through the medium of consciousness, like that which comes immediately through external sensation, carries upon its face its own demonstration; and so strongly does it impress the soul,

that we are compelled to yield ourselves up to the insanity of universal scepticism before we can doubt it for a moment. Here, then, we base our first argument for the proper freedom of the will of man, or, more properly speaking, for the freedom of man in the exercise of the will. Who can convince me that I have not the power, either to write or to refrain from writing, either to sit still or arise up and walk? And this conviction, in reference to a self-determining power of the mind, or a control of the will belonging to ourselves, is universal. Philosophy, falsely so called, may puzzle the intellect, or confuse the understanding, but still the conviction comes upon every man with resistless force, that he has within himself the power of choice. He feels that he exercises this power. We know the advocates of necessity admit that men generally, at first view of the subject, suppose that they are not necessitated in their volitions, but they assert that this is an illusion which the superior light of philosophy will dissipate. An acute metaphysician has advanced the idea, "that when men only skim the surface of philosophy they discard common sense, but when they go profoundly into philosophic research, they return again to their earliest dictates of common sense." In the same way, a mere peep into philosophy has caused many, especially such as are predisposed to scepticism, to assert the doctrine of fatality; but a thorough knowledge of true philosophy generally serves to establish our first convictions, that we are free in our volitions. Can that philosophy be sound, or that reasoning correct, which would set aside the strongest testimony of our own senses? which would persuade us that it is midnight when we behold the full blaze of the meridian sun? No more can we accredit that mode of reasoning which would uproot the testimony of our own consciousness. That, in my volitions, I am free to choose good or evil, and not impelled by a necessity as absolute as the laws of gravitation, is a position which I can no more doubt from my own consciousness, than I can doubt my own existence. This is evident from the fact that all men have a sense of blame when they do wrong, and of approbation when they do right. Am I charged with the commission of a crime,—convince me that the force of circumstances rendered its avoidance absolutely impossible, and I can no more blame myself in the premises, than I can censure the tree that fell upon the traveller as he was journeying on the highway. Remorse for the past depends upon a consciousness of our freedom for its very existence. This conviction of freedom is so indelible and universal on the minds of men that no human effort can erase it. It may be smothered or obscured for a season in the minds of sophisticated reasoners, but in the hours of sober honesty it will regain its position, and reassert its

dominion, even over the minds of such men as Voltaire, Hume, and Edwards, who have discarded it in their philosophy.

2. *Our next argument for the self-determining power of the mind over the will, is founded upon the history of the world in general.* Turn your attention to any portion or to any period of the world's history, and you find among all nations, in their very language and common modes of speech, terms and phrases expressive of the power which all men possess of determining or being the authors of their own wills. You will find men speaking of the acts of their minds and the determinations of their wills as though they were free. And you will also find terms expressive of blame and of praise, clearly recognizing the principle that when a man does wrong he is blamed, because he *might* and *should* have avoided the wrong. In all countries it is a fact, that, in public estimation, a man's guilt is extenuated in proportion as the impediments in the way of avoiding the crime are increased; and upon the same principle, when the difficulties in the way of avoiding the act are absolutely insurmountable, no one is then blamed for doing the unavoidable act. Again; the laws of all civilized nations punish the criminal upon the supposition that he might have avoided the crime. And if it could be made appear that, in the act in question, the man was not a self-willing agent, but was only a tool used by the force of others which he had not the power to resist, in this case, there is not a government upon earth that would not as readily punish the sword of the assassin as that man who was merely a passive instrument, having no power to resist. Why, we might ask, are rewards and punishments connected with the statutory provisions of all countries, and held out before the community, if it be not to encourage to virtue and to deter from vice? And why should these sanctions be exhibited to the subjects of all civilized governments, if men have no power to influence their own wills? Will you exhibit motives and inducements to excite them to endeavor to control their wills, when they really possess no such power? I know it may be said that these motives are designed to fix, by a necessary and invincible influence, the will itself, independent of any active agency in the man. Nothing can be more absurd and contrary to fact than such a supposition. If motives are to fix the character of the will necessarily, why is the man called upon to attend to the motives, to weigh them carefully, and make a correct decision in reference to their real weight? A further consideration of the doctrine of motives will be assigned to another lecture. Under the present head, we would only add, that all men, in all ages and in all places, have treated each other as though they believed they were free agents. If we discard this doctrine, and assert the principles of necessity, we must change universal customs which have stood from time

immemorial, and rend the very foundations of society. If man be not a free agent, why is he held bound for the fulfilment of his promise, and censured in the failure thereof? Why is he held up as an object of scorn and detestation for any crime under heaven? Why, we might ask, are jails and penitentiaries, and various modes of punishment, more or less severe, everywhere prevalent in civilized lands? If the advocates of necessity really believe in the truth of their system, let them be consistent, and go throughout the civilized world, and plead for the destruction of all terms of language expressive of blame or praise; let them decry the unjustifiable prejudice of nations, by which benevolence and virtue have been applauded, and selfishness and vice condemned. Let them proclaim it abroad, that the robber and the murderer are as innocent as the infant or the saint, since all men only act as they are necessarily acted upon; and let them teach all nations to abolish at once and forever every description of punishment for crime or misdemeanor. Such would be the consistent course for sincere necessitarians.

3. Our third evidence of man's proper free agency is founded upon *the Divine administration toward him, as exhibited in the Holy Scriptures*. Here we shall perceive that revelation beautifully harmonizes with nature; and those clear and decisive evidences of our free agency, which, as we have seen, are derived from experience and observation, are abundantly confirmed by the Book of God. We see this, first, in contemplation of the condition in which man was placed immediately after his creation. A moral law was given him to keep, and a severe penalty annexed to its transgression. Upon the supposition that man was not made a free agent, God must have known it; and if so, under these circumstances, to have given him a moral law for the government of his actions, would have been inconsistent with the Divine wisdom; for a moral law, commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong, can only be adapted to beings capable of doing both right and wrong. Suppose, when the Almighty created man capable of walking erect upon the earth, but incapable of flying in the air like the fowls of heaven, He had given him a law forbidding him to walk, and commanding him to fly; every intelligent being would at once perceive the folly of such a statute. And wherefore? Simply because man has no power to fly, and, therefore, to command him to do so must be perfectly useless. But suppose, in addition to the command requiring an impossibility, the severest penalty had been annexed to its violation; the administration would not only be charged with folly, but it would be stamped with cruelty of the deepest dye. Suppose, again, that, circumstanced as man was in his creation, the law of God had commanded him to breathe the surrounding atmosphere, and to permit the blood to circulate in his veins,

and a glorious promise of reward had been annexed to obedience. In this case, also, the law would universally be pronounced an evidence of folly in the Lawgiver; and why so? Because obedience flows naturally from the constitution of man. He can no more avoid it than a leaden ball let loose from the hand can avoid the influence of gravitation. In the former supposition, obedience was impossible; for man can no more fly than he can create a world: in the latter, disobedience is impossible; for man can no more prevent the circulation of his blood than he can stop the sun in his course. But, in both cases, the administration is marked with folly. Thus it is seen that a moral law can only be given to a being capable of both right and wrong. Hence, as God gave man a moral law for the government of his actions, he must have been a free moral agent, capable alike of obedience and of disobedience. We think it impossible for the unbiased mind to read the history of the creation and fall of man, and not feel that, in that case, God treated him as a free moral agent. Upon the supposition that the will, and all the actions of man, are necessarily determined by the operation of causes over which he has no control, (according to the principles of necessity,) the administration of God, in the history of the fall of man, is represented as more silly and cruel than ever disgraced the reign of the meanest earthly tyrant!! Against the administration of the righteous Governor of the universe, shall such foul charges be brought? Forbid it, reason! Forbid it, truth! Forbid it, Scripture!! Can a rational man believe that God would so constitute Adam in Paradise as to make his eating the forbidden fruit result as necessarily from his unavoidable condition as any effect from its cause, and then, with a pretence of justice, and a claim to goodness, say, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?" Surely, most surely not. The whole history of the fall, in the light of reason, of common sense, and in view of all that we know of the Divine character and government, proclaims, in language clear and forcible, the doctrine of man's free moral agency.

Milton has most beautifully commented upon this subject, supposing God to speak in reference to man:—

"I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal powers, —
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith and love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive,
What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,

When will and reason, (reason also is choice,)
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served necessity,
 Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,

So were created——

So, without least impulse or shadow of fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge and what they choose: For so
 I formed them *free*; and *free* they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves. I else must change
 Their nature, and reverse the high decree,
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
 Their freedom; *they themselves ordained their fall.*"

(2.) In the next place, *the Scriptures everywhere address man as a being capable of CHOOSING*; as possessing a control over his own volitions, and as being held responsible for the proper exercise of that control. In Deut. xxx. 19, we read, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live." And in Joshua xxiv. 15, "*Choose* you this day whom you will serve." Now, to *choose* is to *determine* or *fix the will*; but men are here called upon to choose for themselves, which, upon the supposition that their will is, in all cases, fixed necessarily by antecedent causes beyond their control, is nothing better than solemn mockery. Our Saviour, in Matt. xxiii. 37, complains of the Jews, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not*!" Again; in John v. 40, our Lord says, "Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life." These, and numerous other passages of a similar import, refer expressly to the will of men as being under their own control. And to put the matter beyond dispute, men are here not only held responsible for the character of their *will*, but they are actually represented as justly punishable on that account. In the instance of Christ lamenting over Jerusalem, and complaining "How oft would I have gathered you, &c., and ye would not," the punishment is announced in the words which immediately follow: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Now, the question is, can the Saviour of the world, in terms of the deepest solemnity, upbraid men for the obstinacy of their wills, and denounce against them the severest punishment for the same, if the whole matter is determined by necessity, and no more under their control than the revolutions of the planets? According to the notion of President Edwards and others, the *will* is as necessarily fixed by antecedent causes as any effect whatever is by its appropriate

cause. If so, the agency of man can have no influence in determining his *will*, and consequently he cannot, in justice, be held accountable and punishable for the same. But, as we have shown, the Scriptures hold man accountable and punishable for his will; consequently, it cannot be determined by necessity, but must be, in the true sense, dependent on man's own proper agency.

(3.) In the last place, we argue the proper freedom of the human will, from *the doctrine of a general judgment, and future rewards and punishments, as set forth in the Scriptures*. Here, we need not enlarge. That all men are responsible to God for all the determinations of their will, and that in a future day they will be judged, and rewarded or punished accordingly, are matters expressly taught in the Scriptures. Now, according to the necessitarian scheme, how, we ask, can these things be reconciled with the Divine attributes? As well might we suppose that an all-wise and merciful Being would arraign before his bar, and punish or reward, the water for running downwards, or the sparks for flying upwards. As well might he punish the foot because it is not the hand, or the hand because it is not the eye. As well might he reward or punish the fish for swimming in the sea, or the birds for flying in the air! If such a procedure would universally be pronounced absurd in the extreme, we ask, upon the supposition that the will of man is determined by antecedent or external causes, as necessarily as the laws of nature, where is the difference? Every argument that would show absurdity in the one case, would, in all fairness, show the same in the other.

In conclusion upon this part of the subject, we think it proper briefly to notice the absurdity of attempting to reconcile the doctrines of necessity with the proper freedom and accountability of man. This, President Edwards and many others have labored hard to accomplish. They have contended that, although the will is irresistibly fixed by necessity, yet man is properly a free and accountable moral agent, merely because he has a will, acts voluntarily, and is not, by natural force, constrained to go contrary to his will. The names by which things are called cannot, in the least, alter their nature. Hence, to load man with the ennobling epithets of moral agency, freedom, liberty, accountability, &c., while we bind him fast with the cords of necessity, can never tend in the least to slacken those cords, or to mend his condition. To say that a man enjoys freedom merely because he has liberty to obey his will, when that will is fixed by necessity, is as absurd as to contend that a man enjoys freedom in a civil sense, merely because he is at liberty to obey the laws under which he is placed, when those laws are enacted by a cruel tyrant over whom he has no control,

and are only a collection of bloody edicts. Would any man contend that because he had the privilege of acting according to such a system of laws, thus arbitrarily imposed upon him, he was therefore in the enjoyment of freedom in the most rational sense? Far from it. And why? Simply because the oppressed subject would require an agency in making those laws. So long as this is denied him, and he feels upon his neck the galling yoke of tyranny, in vain might you endeavor to sojace him by enlarging upon his exalted privilege of obeying the law. You might assure him that no natural force could constrain him to go contrary to the law, and that, consequently, he is possessed of freedom in the proper sense, but all would be in vain. He would only feel that you were mocking at his chains! We would now appeal to the candid mind to determine if this is not precisely the kind of moral freedom which President Edwards allows to man, on account of which he strongly pleads that he is properly a free agent and justly accountable? Most unquestionably it is. He contends that man is a free moral agent because he may do as he wills, when his will is as unalterably fixed by necessity as the pillars of heaven. Such liberty as the above can no more render its possessor a free, accountable moral agent, than that possessed by a block or a stone. Indeed, there is no difference between the liberty attributed to man by the learned President of Princeton College, and that possessed by a block of marble as it falls to the earth when let loose from the top of a tower. We may call the man *free*, because he may act according to his will or inclination, while that will is determined by necessity; but has not the marble precisely the same freedom? It has perfect liberty to fall; it is not constrained by natural force to move in any other direction. If it falls necessarily, even so, on the principle of Edwards, man acts necessarily. If it be said that the marble cannot avoid falling as it does, even so man cannot avoid acting according to his will, just as he does. If it be said that he has no disposition, and makes no effort to act contrary to his will, even so the marble has no inclination to fall in any other direction than it does. The marble moves *freely*, because it has no inclination to move otherwise; but it moves necessarily, because irresistibly impelled by the law of gravitation. Just so man acts freely, because he acts according to his will; but he acts necessarily, because he can no more change his will than he can make a world. And thus it is plain, that, although necessitarians may say they believe in free agency, and man's accountability, it is a freedom just such as pertains to lifeless matter. If, according to Edwards, man is free, and justly accountable for his actions merely because he acts according to his own will, when he has no control over that will, upon the same principle the maniac would be a free, accountable agent. If, in a paroxysm of madness, he murders his

father, he acts according to his will. It is a voluntary act, and necessitarians cannot excuse him because his will was not under his own control; for, in the view of their system, it was as much so as the will of any man in any case possibly can be. The truth is, it is an abuse of language to call that freedom which binds fast in the chains of necessity. Acting voluntarily amounts to no liberty at all, if I cannot possibly act otherwise than I do. The question is, not whether I have a will, or whether I may act according to my will, but, what determines the will? This is the point to be settled in the question of free agency. It is admitted that the will controls the actions; but who controls the will? As the will controls the actions, it necessarily follows that whoever controls the will must be accountable for the actions. Whoever controls the will must be the proper author of all that necessarily results from it; and consequently should be held accountable for the same. But man, say necessitarians, has no control whatever over his will. It is fixed by necessity just as it is, so that it could no more be otherwise than the effect could cease to result from the cause. According to this, we may talk as we may about free agency, the liberty of the will, accountability, &c., but man, after all the embellishment we can impart, is a free, accountable agent just in the same sense as the most insignificant particle of lifeless matter. Here we will close the present lecture by calling to mind what we have endeavored to exhibit. 1. We have endeavored to explain what is implied in the proper free moral agency of man. 2. We have endeavored to establish that doctrine by the *evidence of consciousness; by an observation of the history of the world, and by an appeal to the Divine administration as set forth in the Scriptures.* Let the reader decide

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XIX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Has the free agency of man been a subject of dispute?</p> <p>2. In what two general classes are the disputants placed?</p> <p>3. What is meant by an <i>agent</i>?</p> <p>4. By a <i>moral agent</i>?</p> <p>5. By a <i>free moral agent</i>?</p> <p>6. What is the definition of liberty as given by Edwards?</p> <p>7. What is the Arminian definition?</p> <p>8. What is the precise point of controversy between necessitarians and the advocates for free agency in reference to the will?</p> <p>9. What are the three leading arguments for free agency?</p> <p>10. Explain the argument from consciousness.</p> <p>11. What is the argument from the world's history?</p> | <p>12. What is the argument from the Divine administration as revealed in the Scriptures?</p> <p>13. How is the proof conducted in reference to Adam in Paradise?</p> <p>14. How in the addresses to man as a being capable of choosing?</p> <p>15. How in reference to the general judgment and rewards and punishments?</p> <p>16. Has the attempt been made to reconcile necessity and free agency?</p> <p>17. By what means?</p> <p>18. How is this attempt shown to be vain?</p> <p>19. How does it appear that according to the doctrine of necessity man cannot be accountable?</p> <p>20. What kind of free agency is consistent with the doctrine of necessity?</p> <p>21. What has been attempted in this lecture?</p> |
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LECTURE XX.

THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN.—OBJECTIONS.

WE propose, in this lecture, to examine some of the principal OBJECTIONS which have been urged against the view taken in the preceding lecture of the freedom of the will. Those most worthy of notice are the following, viz. :—

I. It said to be *absurd in itself*.

II. It is said to be *irreconcilable with the Scripture account of the Divine prescience*.

III. It is said to *conflict with the doctrine of motives*.

We propose a respectful attention to each of these grand objections.

I. It is alleged that the view we have taken of the proper freedom of the will is *absurd in itself*. President Edwards has argued at great length that the self-active power of the mind in the determination of the will, as contended for by Arminians, is absurd in itself, because it implies a preceding determination of the will to fix each free volition, and that this would imply an infinite series of volitions, which is absurd. President Day, of Yale College, who seems to be an apt disciple of Edwards, has, in a late work on the Will, highly complimented the treatise of Edwards, as having furnished, in this argument, an unanswerable refutation of the Arminian notion of freedom. And truly we must say, that the position, “that if each active volition is necessarily preceded by another, this would imply an infinite series, and consequently be absurd,” is a matter so obvious, that the numerous pages devoted by the learned author to this subject might have been spared. Indeed, he seems to have labored and proved, to an extent almost beyond endurance, a position which no intelligent mind can dispute. Had he shown the same solicitude for the establishment of his premises, and been equally successful in that particular, there could be no objection to his *conclusion*. That the Arminian notion of the self-active power of the mind in determining the will implies that each volition must be preceded by another volition, is what has been asserted, but has never yet been proved. The advocates of necessity, although they admit that by the self-determining power of the will is meant “the soul in the

exercise of a power of willing," yet, when they engage in argument, appear to forget this admission, and proceed as though the will were supposed to be an agent separate and distinct from the mind or soul in the act of willing. Hence they involve the discussion in confusion, and bewilder the mind in a maze of verbal contradiction and absurdity. In every act of the will, let it be distinctly understood that the mind or soul is the agent, and the will is only expressive of the act or state of the mind or soul at the time, and under the condition, of willing. Now let us inquire if every act of the soul in *willing* must, according to the Arminian notion of freedom, be preceded by another act of the soul in willing? Why is it that there can be no choice or act of willing performed by the mind itself, unless it is preceded by another act that determines it? Surely a choice preceded by another choice which determines it is no choice at all; and to say that every free act, or self-determined act, must be preceded by another, by which it is determined, is the same as to say that there can be no free or self-determined act. And this is the very point in dispute that ought to be proved, and not taken for granted. Indeed, we may directly deny it, and make our appeal to common sense to sustain us in the position. For illustration, we refer to the first vicious choice ever made by man. Now let us contemplate the history of this matter as it really transpired. The tempter came to man for the first time, and presented the seducing bait. Man willed to disobey. Here we see but one act of the mind. There is not an act determining to choose the evil, and then another consequent act choosing the evil. The act determining to choose is really choosing. Determining to choose in a certain way, and choosing in that way, are the same thing. Now to say that Adam could not, in the exercise of his own powers, independent of a predetermining cause operating upon him, choose between the evil and the good, is the same as to say that God could not make a free agent. Indeed, to say that a choice free from the necessary determination of a preëxisting cause cannot exist, is the same as to say that there is not a free agent in the universe, and that the Deity himself cannot possess self-determining power, but is only acted upon by the impulse of fatality. If the Deity cannot choose or will without something external to himself determining his will, where are his self-existence and independence? For, if the Divine will is always determined by something external to the Divine mind that wills, then there must be something existing prior to all the Divine volitions, separate and distinct from the Deity himself. Again; if it be admitted that the Divine mind can will or choose freely without being acted upon by a preceding choice, then it follows that it is not absurd in itself for the mind to determine its own acts, independent of

necessary preceding causes. If it be admitted that the Deity can will by the free exercise of his own powers, then the only question will be, can he confer this exalted power upon a creature? If we deny that he possesses it himself, we destroy his self-existence and independence. If we deny his ability to confer this power upon a creature, we deny his omnipotence. Then the whole question concerning the absurdity of the Arminian doctrine of the self-determining power of the will resolves itself into a question concerning the Divine power. Necessitarians contend that God cannot create a free, self-determining agent; and Arminians deny the assertion, and appeal to the self-existence and independence of the Deity to disprove the absurdity in the case; and rely upon the omnipotence of God to prove that the creation of moral agents in the Divine image, so far as the self-determining power of the mind is concerned, is not impossible. To say that God cannot make a free agent capable of determining within himself his own volitions, is to limit the Divine power. But Edwards again contends that "this self-determining power of the will implies the absurdity of an effect without a cause." We deny the charge. We are not obliged to admit, that because the will is not determined in every case by a preceding act of the will, or some previous cause external to the mind itself, that, therefore, there is no cause in the case. By no means. If the mind wills one way instead of another, there must be a cause for it; but that cause must not necessarily be either preceding or external, as necessitarians contend. It may be both simultaneous and internal. That is, it may originate in the mind itself at the time of willing. If it be said that, "then the mind itself must be the cause of its own volitions, and if so, there must always be a previous something in the mind to determine it to will in one way instead of another," we reply, truly the mind is the cause of its own volitions to such extent that they are not necessarily determined independent of its own action; but it does not follow that there must be something previously existing in the mind, necessarily determining it to choose as it does. All the previously existing cause essential in the case is, the capacity of the mind, in the exercise of its powers, to will at the time either the one way or the other. In the exercise of this capacity upon the principles of free agency, and not impelled by stern necessity, the particular will in a given case originates; and thus we see how it was in the case given of the first transgression. Man had been endued with the power to choose, or to control his own will. The tempter came; in the exercise of that power, man chose the evil. Here the cause was in himself, and originated in and flowed from the manner in which he exercised his powers. This manner of exercising his powers resulted, not necessarily,

but contingently, from the nature of the powers themselves. He might have exercised them differently. The cause, or the determining power, was in himself. God placed it there ; and for God to place it there, to be exercised contingently for good or evil, implies no more absurdity, so far as we can see, than for God to have placed the cause in something preceding, external, and necessary. And thus we think the doctrine of free agency is successfully vindicated from the charge of absurdity and self-contradiction. So far from being absurd in itself, it presents the only consistent illustration of the Divine attributes, and the only satisfactory comment upon the Divine administration.

II. The next grand objection to the doctrine of free agency is, *that it is supposed to be irreconcilable with the Scripture account of the Divine prescience*. Necessitarians argue that free agency, in the proper sense, implies contingency ; and that contingency cannot be reconciled with the Divine foreknowledge. It is admitted by Arminians, and the advocates of free agency generally, that the foreknowledge of God extends to all things great and small, whether necessary or contingent, — that it is perfect and certain. The only question is, whether this foreknowledge implies necessity ? That whatever God foreknows certainly will take place, we are free to acknowledge ; but that this certain foreknowledge implies absolute necessity, is what we deny, and what, we believe, cannot be proved. All the arguments we have seen adduced for that purpose are based upon the supposition that certainty and necessity are synonymous. Now, if we can show that they are separate and distinct things, and that certainty does not imply necessity, the objection under consideration must fall to the ground. We would remark, in the first place, that this objection labors under the serious difficulty, that, while it aims to destroy the free agency of man, it really would destroy the free agency of God. For, if whatever is foreknown as certain must also be necessary, and cannot possibly be otherwise, then, as God foreknew from eternity every act that he would perform throughout all duration, he has, all the while, instead of being a free agent, acting after the “counsel of his own will,” been nothing more than a passive machine, acting as acted upon by stern necessity. This conclusion is most horribly revolting ; but, according to the argument of necessitarians, it cannot possibly be avoided. And if we are forced to the conclusion that God only acts as impelled by necessity, and can in no case act differently from what he does, then it must follow that necessity or fate made and preserves all things ; — but is it not obvious that this doctrine of necessity, as applied to the Deity, is most glaringly absurd ? To suppose that the great Jehovah, in all his acts, has been impelled by necessity, or, which is the same thing, that He has only moved as He was acted upon, is to suppose

the eternal existence of some moving power separate and distinct from the Deity, and superior to him; which would be at once to deny his independence and supremacy. We cannot, then, without the most consummate arrogance and absurdity, admit the position that all the acts of the Deity are brought about by necessity. Yet they are foreknown; and if, as we have seen, God's foreknowledge of *his* own acts does not render them necessary, and destroy *his* free agency, how can it be consistently argued that God's foreknowledge of the acts of men renders them necessary, and destroys *their* free agency? Again; let us contemplate the subject of foreknowledge in relation to the actions of men, and see what evidence we can find that it implies necessity. It has been contended that God cannot foreknow that a future event certainly will take place, unless that event necessarily depends upon something by which it is known. "The only way," says President Edwards, "by which anything can be known, is for it to be evident; and if there be any evidence of it, it must be one of these two sorts, either self-evidence or proof; an evident thing must be either evident in itself, or evident in something else." This he lays down as his premises, from which he proceeds to argue that God cannot foreknow future events, unless they are rendered absolutely necessary. That his premises, and the reasoning based upon them, may hold good in reference to the knowledge of man, we do not question; but that they apply to the foreknowledge of the Deity, cannot be shown. If man foreknows anything, that foreknowledge must result from a knowledge of something now existing, between which and the event foreknown there is a necessary connection. But is it legitimate to infer that, because this is the case with man, it must also be the case with God? Have we a right to measure the Holy One by ourselves? Indeed, to infer the necessity of all things from the Divine prescience, is to limit the perfections of Jehovah. It is to say either that God could not constitute anything contingent, or that, after having so constituted it, he cannot foreknow it. Either hypothesis would argue a limitation to the perfections of God.

This subject, we think, may be rendered plain by a careful reflection on the nature of knowledge. What is it? Is it an active power, possessing a distinct independent existence? We answer. no. It is passive in its nature, and possesses only a dependent and relative existence. It can exist only in the mind of an intelligent being. Knowledge, as such, can exert no immediate and active influence on anything whatever. It has been said that "knowledge is power;" but it is not implied in that expression that it is a power capable of exerting itself. All that is implied is, that it directs an active agent in the manner of exerting his power. What effect, I would ask, can my knowledge of a

past event have upon that event? Surely none at all. What effect can my knowledge of a future event have upon it? Considered in itself, it can have no influence at all. Is there any event, whether past, present, or future, on which the mere knowledge of man can have any influence? Certainly there is none. Knowledge is a something existing in the mind. It has its seat there, and of itself it is incapable of walking abroad to act upon extraneous objects. I would, therefore, ask, what effect the Divine knowledge can have on a past or present event? Is it not obvious that it can have none. The knowledge of God does not affect the faithfulness of Abraham, or the treachery of Judas, in the least. Those events would still continue to have occurred precisely as they did, if we could suppose all trace of them to be erased from the Divine mind. And if we could suppose that God was not now looking down upon me, could any one believe that I would write with any more or less freedom on that account? Surely not. If, then, knowledge considered in all these different aspects is passive in its nature, how can we rationally infer that its passivity is converted into activity so soon as we view it in the aspect of the Divine prescience?

But it will doubtless be argued, that, although the foreknowledge of God may not *render* future events necessary, yet it proves that they are so. To this we reply, that it proves that they are certain, but cannot prove that they are *necessary*. But still, it will be asked, where is the difference? If they are certain, must they not, therefore, be necessary? That we may illustrate the distinction between certainty and necessity, we will refer to the crime of Judas in betraying the Saviour. Here we would say, it was a matter certain in the Divine mind, from all eternity, that Judas would commit this crime. God foreknew it. Although it was also foretold, yet it was not rendered any the more certain by that circumstance; for prediction is only knowledge recorded or made manifest; but knowledge is equally certain, whether secret or revealed. The pointed question now is, could Judas possibly have avoided that crime? Was he still a free agent; and might he have acted differently; or was he impelled by absolute necessity? We answer, he could have avoided the crime. He was still a free agent; and might have acted differently. Here, it will no doubt be argued, that if he had avoided the crime, the foreknowledge of God would have been defeated, and the Scriptures broken. To fairly solve this difficulty, and draw the line between certainty and necessity, we answer, that if Judas, in the exercise of the power of free agency with which he was endued, had proved faithful, and avoided the crime in question, neither would the foreknowledge of God have been frustrated, nor the Scriptures broken. In that case, the foreknowledge of God

would have been different, accordingly as the subject varied upon which it was exercised. God could not then have foreknown his treachery; and had it not been foreknown, it never could have been predicted. The truth is, the prediction depends on the foreknowledge, and the foreknowledge on the event itself. The error of the necessitarians on this subject is, they put the effect for the cause, and the cause for the effect. They make the foreknowledge the cause of the event, whereas the event is the cause of the foreknowledge. No event ever took place merely because God foreknew it; on the contrary, the taking place of the event is the cause of his having foreknown it. Let this distinction be kept in mind, that, in the order of nature, the event does not depend on the knowledge of it, but the knowledge on the event, and we may readily see a distinction between certainty and necessity. It is certain with God who will be saved, and who will not; yet it is likewise certain that salvation is made possible to many, who, according to the certain prescience of God, never will embrace it. God has made some things necessary, and some things contingent. Necessary events he foreknew as necessary. That is, he foreknew that they could not possibly take place otherwise. Contingent events he foreknew as contingent; that is, he foreknew that they might take place otherwise. And thus, we think, foreknowledge and free agency may be harmonized, and the Divine government successfully vindicated.

III. We would now consider the objection to the view taken of free agency, which is founded upon the doctrine of motives. Necessitarians have relied with great confidence on their arguments from this source. In illustrating their views of the doctrine of motives, they have chosen different figures, all amounting substantially to the same thing;—leading necessarily to the same conclusion. Dr. Hartley has represented the thoughts and feelings of the soul as resulting from the various vibrations of the brain, produced by the influence of motives, or surrounding circumstances. He admits frankly that his scheme implies “the necessity of human actions;” but he says, “I am sorry for it, but I cannot help it.” Lord Kames represents the universe as “one vast machine composed of innumerable wheels, all closely linked together, and moving as they are moved.” Man he considers as “one wheel fixed in the middle of the vast automaton, moving just as necessarily as the sun, moon, or earth.” President Edwards has represented “motives and surrounding objects as reaching through the senses to a finely wrought nervous system, and by the impressions made there, necessarily producing thought, volition, and action, according to the fixed laws of cause and effect.” According to all these three general systems, the conclusion in reference to the influence of motives, &c., is the same. That is, it appears that

the mind is like a machine or a pair of scales, only a passive substance, moving as it is acted upon by force applied to the wheel, or weight to the scale. Here is the leading principle in the systems of all the advocates of philosophical necessity; and upon this grand point the advocates of free agency join issue. That we may see distinctly the point upon which the issue is made, we may here observe, that advocates on both sides have very frequently mistaken or misrepresented the views of their opponents. First, then, let it be understood that necessitarians, by motives as influencing the will, do not maintain that the strongest motive, considered in reference to its real and proper weight, always prevails; but, by the strongest motive they understand the motive having the greatest influence over the individual at the time, and under all the circumstances of the case. This is the same as saying that the prevailing motive always prevails; which is only the assertion of a simple truism, which no one can dispute. The point, therefore, in which the matter of controversy is involved, is not whether the strongest motive, considered in reference to its real weight, always prevails. This, necessitarians are misrepresented, if they are charged with holding. Nor is it in dispute, whether the strongest motive, considered in reference to its influence over the individual at the time and under the circumstances, always prevails. This, the advocates of free agency do not deny; for that would be the same as to deny that the prevailing motive is the prevailing motive. Nor is it a matter of dispute whether motives and surrounding circumstances have any influence in determining the will. That they do have a powerful influence, metaphorically speaking, none can deny. What then, we ask, is the real point of dispute? It is simply this. Do motives presented to the mind, and surrounding circumstances, have an efficient, absolute, and irresistible influence over the will, so as in all cases to make it necessarily what it is? This is the real and the only point in the doctrine of motives on which the controversy turns. Necessitarians affirm on this question, and the advocates of free agency deny. We will endeavor impartially to examine the question. That we may understand the true doctrine concerning the influence of motives on the will, we observe, 1. God, the Creator, must have possessed within himself the power of action; otherwise, creation never could have taken place; for, previous to creation, nothing existed but God, and consequently, if he could only act as acted upon by something external to himself, as there was nothing in the universe but himself, he must have remained forever in a state of inaction, and creation could not have originated. Now it must be admitted, either that God has created beings capable of acting without being necessarily acted upon by something external to themselves, or he has not. If he has not, then

it will follow that there is but one agent in the universe, and that is God ; and angels and men are only patients, no more capable of self-motion than a clod or a stone. This theory at once destroys the distinction between matter and mind, is directly repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, and most recklessly subversive of the plainest dictates of common sense ! And yet, it will appear that it is the only theory consistent with the views of necessitarians on the subject of motives. Now let us take the opposite position, and suppose, according to common sense and Scripture, that two distinct classes of substances have been created,—material and immaterial. In other words, that God has not only created dead, inanimate matter, capable only of moving as it is moved, but that he has also created intelligent beings, endued with self-moving energy, capable, not of themselves, but in the exercise of their derived powers, of voluntary action, independent of external and necessary force, and it will be at once apparent that there is a radical and essential distinction in nature between lifeless matter and these intelligent beings. If this distinction be admitted, which cannot possibly be denied while the voice of common sense or Scripture is allowed to be heard, then it will follow that lifeless matter and intelligent beings are regulated by laws as different as are their essential natures. Here we find the origin of the grand metaphysical blunder of necessitarians of every school, and of every age. They have made no distinction between matter and mind. The ancient Manichees, the Stoics, the Atheistic and Deistic philosophers, Spinoza, Hobbes, Voltaire, Hume, and others, have been followed, in this confounding of matter and mind, by many learned and excellent men, such as President Edwards of Princeton, and President Day of Yale College. Indeed, the whole treatise of Edwards, in which he has written three hundred pages on the human will, is predicated upon this blunder. His almost interminable chain of metaphysical lore, when clearly seen in all its links, is most palpably an argument in a circle. He assumes that the mind is similar to matter, in order to prove that it can only act as acted upon ; and then, because it can only act as acted upon, he infers that, in this respect, the mind, like matter, is governed by necessity. Although he turns the subject over and over, and presents it in an almost endless variety of shape, it all, so far as we can see, amounts to this :—the mind in its volitions can only act as it is acted upon, therefore the will is necessarily determined. And what is this, but to say that the will is necessarily determined, because it is necessarily determined ? Can any real distinction be pointed out between the labored argument of Edwards and this simple truism ? But we shall soon see that this assumed position—that the mind can only act as it is acted upon—is philosophically false. This grand pillar upon which the huge metaphysical edifice has

been reared, may be shown to be rotten throughout, yea, it may be snapped asunder by a gentle stroke from the hammer of reason and common sense; and then the edifice, left without foundation, must fall to the ground.

Let us now contemplate these motives which are said to act upon the mind so as necessarily to influence the will. Let us look them full in the face, and ask the question, what are they? Are they intelligent beings, capable of locomotion? Are they endued with a self-moving energy? Yea, more, are they capable of not only moving themselves, but also of imparting their force to something external to themselves, so as to coerce action in that which could not act without them? If these questions be answered in the negative, then it will follow that motives, considered in themselves, can no more act on the mind, so as necessarily to determine the will, than a world can be created by something without existence. If these questions be answered in the affirmative, then it will follow that motives, at least, are free agents,—capable of acting without being acted upon, and endued with self-controlling and self-determining energy. Necessitarians may fall upon either horn of the dilemma. But on which horn soever they fall, their system must perish. If the attempt be made to evade this by saying that motives do not act themselves, but God is the agent acting upon man, and determining his will through the instrumentality of motives,—if this be the meaning, then I would ask, why not call things by their right names? Why attribute the determination of the will to the influence of motives, and at the same time declare that motives are perfectly inefficient, capable of exercising no influence whatever? Is not this fairly giving up the question, and casting “to the moles and to the bats” the revered argument for necessity, founded upon the influence of motives? Again; to say that motives exercise no active influence, but are only passive instruments in the hand of God, by which *he* determines the will, by an immediate energy exerted at the time, is the same as to say that God is the only agent in the universe; that he wills and acts for man; and, by his own direct energy, performs every physical and moral act in the universe, as really and properly as he created the worlds; and then will condemn and punish men everlastingly for his own proper acts! Is this the doctrine of philosophical necessity? Truly it is. And well may we say this is FATALITY! This is ABSURDITY!

Now, let us turn from the absurdities of the necessitarian scheme, and see if we can perceive the true doctrine on the subject of motives. Suppose, as I pass the street, I perceive in the shop on my right the choicest liquors most invitingly displayed; I am tempted to drink to excess; I parley with the temptation; I long for the delicious wines; I

think of the dreadful consequences of inebriety ; but then returns my love of strong drink, and I determine in my will to yield myself up to intoxication. Here we perceive an act has been performed, by which the will is fixed in a particular way ; but the question is, who is the agent in this act ? Necessitarians would say, the motive to intoxication has been the active agent, and man has been the passive instrument. But we ask, what motive, or what surrounding circumstance in this case, has put forth active energy, so as not only to move itself without being acted upon, but also to communicate an irresistible impulse to something external to itself ? Can the wines in the bottles exhibit their eloquent tongues, and plead with the passer-by to devour them ? Surely not ; they are themselves as passive as the bricks in the wall. Can the love for strong drink assert a separate and independent existence, and rise up as an active agent, independent of the man, and use arguments with the understanding, and coercively determine the will ? This is so far from being the case, that these motives have no existence itself, independent of the man. They only derive their existence through the exercise of the active powers of man ; and shall it be said that they necessarily control those powers, and even that those powers cannot be exerted except as they are necessarily impelled by motives ? Can motives be the cause and the effect in the same sense, at the same time ? The plain truth is, motives do not act themselves at all. It is the mind that acts upon them. They are passive, and only move as they are moved. The mind of man is the active agent that picks the motive up, turns it about, and estimates its weight. This will be rendered somewhat plainer when we reflect that two objects both passive can never act upon each other ; some active power must first move the one, or it can never move the other. Suppose two blocks of marble placed near together in the same room ; can the one arise up and impart a direct and resistless influence to the other, so as to cause it necessarily to change its place ? Certainly not. And why ? Simply because they are both passive. Now, as motives, arguments, and surrounding circumstances, are obviously passive in their nature, incapable of moving themselves, it necessarily follows, that if the mind is also passive, the one cannot act upon the other,—neither motives upon the mind, nor the mind upon motives. Hence, agreeably to the assertion of necessitarians, that the mind is passive, the will cannot be influenced by motives at all. The fallacy of the reasoning of Edwards and others on this subject, consists in their considering the influence attributed to motives as an independent and active influence, whereas, motives are all the time passive, and are really acted upon by the mind, soul, or feelings of man. So far from motives actively determining the will, through the mind or soul, it is

the mind or soul that determines the will, and, by its own active energy, gives to motives all the influence they possess.

This is evident from the very nature of motives. What are they? Are they not arguments, reasons, or persuasions? Now, if the mind can exercise no free agency of its own, in attending to arguments, examining reasons, or yielding to persuasions, why address them to man, and exhort him to give them their due weight? The very fact that they are motives, arguments, reasons, or persuasions, is proof sufficient that they are designed to influence the will, not necessarily and irresistibly, but only through the agency of man. So that, when we admit that the motive having the greatest influence, at the time and under the circumstances, always prevails,—or, in other words, that the prevailing motive always prevails,—the question is still before us, why does it prevail? What gives it the greatest influence? Does it exercise this influence of itself independently? We have already shown that it cannot. What then gives it this prevailing influence? It is the free and uncoerced agency of the man himself which determines the influence of the motive, which gives it that influence, and thereby determines the will. If it still be asked, why the mind determines to give to a given motive a certain influence, and to fix the will accordingly; we reply, the reason is in the mind itself. God has endued us with this power. Without it, we could not be moral agents; we could not be accountable; we could no more be rewarded or punished than the earth on which we tread. We think we have said enough to show that the argument against free agency from the doctrine of motives is fallacious, and alike repugnant to reason, common sense and Scripture. And whether, in this lecture, we have successfully vindicated the doctrine of free agency from the objections, that it is absurd in itself, and inconsistent with the Divine prescience and with the doctrine of motives, we submit to the decision of the reader.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What are the three leading objections to free agency?</p> <p>2. How is it attempted to prove that this doctrine is <i>absurd in itself</i>?</p> <p>3. How is the objection answered?</p> <p>4. What is the objection founded upon the doctrine of <i>foreknowledge</i>?</p> <p>5. Is the doctrine of foreknowledge admitted as <i>true</i>?</p> | <p>6. Is it admitted that it implies <i>certainly</i>?</p> <p>7. How, then, is the objection answered?</p> <p>8. What is the objection from the doctrine of <i>motives</i>?</p> <p>9. How is this objection answered?</p> <p>10. What is the precise point of dispute, in reference to motives?</p> <p>11. What has been aimed at in this lecture?</p> |
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LECTURE XXI.

REPENTANCE.

HAVING considered, in the preceding lectures, the great and leading doctrines of theology, so far as they relate more directly to the character of the Divine Being, the history of the creation and fall of man, and the dreadful consequences of that fall, together with the glorious provision made for his recovery in the atonement of Christ; and having in the two preceding lectures endeavored to establish and explain the free agency and accountability of man, we now enter upon the examination of some of those doctrines of revelation in which the benefits of redemption are more directly connected with man, as a fallen, but accountable, moral agent. As a subject appropriate to be discussed at this stage of our general investigation, we propose the doctrine of REPENTANCE.

No apology for devoting a lecture to this subject will be requisite, when we reflect on its prominence, not only with the theologians and sermonizers of every age, but also with the inspired penmen of the New Testament. Repentance was not only a theme familiar with the prophets of the Old Testament, but it was the burthen of the message of John the Baptist, and an important point in the preaching of Christ himself and his immediate apostles.

In the present investigation we propose to consider,—

I. *The NATURE of Repentance.*

II. *The MEANS of Repentance.*

III. *The NECESSITY of Repentance.*

I. In endeavoring to ascertain the Scripture doctrine, in reference to the nature of repentance, which is the point proposed as first to be discussed, we hope to be conducted, by the plain teachings of the Bible, to such conclusions as shall be clear and satisfactory to the candid mind.

1. In inquiring for the Scripture import of repentance, it is natural that our first appeal be made to the etymology of the word. Here, we find that two different words in the Greek Testament, varying in their signification, are rendered “repent.” These are μεταμελομαι and μετανοεω. The former implies a *sorrowful change of the mind*, or properly, *contrition for sin*; the latter implies all that is meant by the former, together with *reformation from sin*. That is, it implies a *sorrow*

for, and a consequent *forsaking of, or turning away from, sin*. Macknight, in reference to these words, makes the following critical remarks: "The first word, *metanoia*, properly denotes such a change of one's opinion concerning some action which he hath done, as produceth a change in his conduct to the better. But the latter word, *metamelcia*, signifies the *grief* which one feels for what he hath done, though it is followed with no alteration of conduct. The two words, however, are used indiscriminately in the LXX, for a *change of conduct*, and for *grief* on account of what hath been done." — (See Mack. on 2 Cor. vii. 10.)

Here it may be observed, that, although there is a diversity, there is no opposition of meaning in these two words. The only difference is, the one implies more than the other. *Matanoeo* implies all that is implied by *metamelamai*, together with something further. It is worthy of notice that with us, in common conversation, we frequently use the English word *repent*, merely to denote the idea of sorrow or contrition for the past, whether that sorrow be accompanied by any change of conduct or not. But in the investigation of the Scripture meaning of repentance, the distinction above made is important to be kept in mind.

In reference to the repentance of Judas, spoken of in Matt. xxvii. 3, a form of the verb *metamelamai* is used; from which we conclude that there is no evidence from that expression whether his repentance went further than mere contrition or not. But generally, where repentance is spoken of in Scripture, connected in any sense with salvation, the word used is a derivative of *metanoeo*. Hence we conclude that the proper definition of *evangelical repentance*, or that repentance which the gospel requires, includes both *contrition* and *reformation*. In accordance with what we have said, we find the definition of repentance, as adopted by Dr. Thomas Scott, to be as follows: — "A genuine sorrow for sin, attended with a real inclination to undo, if it were possible, all we have sinfully done; and consequently an endeavor, as far as we have it in our power, to counteract the consequences of our former evil conduct; with a determination of mind, through Divine grace, to walk for the future in newness of life, evidenced to be sincere by fruits meet for repentance, that is, by all holy dispositions, words, and actions." — (Scott's Works, vol. 4th, page 43.)

Substantially the same, but perhaps better expressed, is the definition of repentance given by Mr. Watson in his Biblical Dictionary, thus: — "Evangelical repentance is a godly sorrow wrought in the heart of a sinful person by the word and Spirit of God, whereby, from a sense of his sin, as offensive to God, and defiling and endangering to his own soul, and from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,

he, with grief and hatred of all his known sins, turns from them to God as his Saviour and Lord."

By attention to the above definitions, as well as from the etymology of the word as already given, it will appear that all that is implied by evangelical repentance is properly embraced under one or the other of the two general heads presented; that is, contrition and reformation. There may be both contrition and reformation, but if they are not of the right kind, if either of them be spurious, the repentance is not genuine. We may suppose the contrition to be genuine, yet if the genuine reformation does not ensue, the repentance is not evangelical. Or we may suppose a thorough reformation to take place, at least so far as externals are concerned, yet, if it does not proceed from a right source, — if it does not flow from a "godly sorrow, wrought by the Spirit of God," — the repentance cannot be genuine.

It may, however, be necessary to enlarge somewhat upon the definition given.

First, then, in reference to that part of repentance which we have termed contrition, we would observe, that it always presupposes and flows from conviction. What we think to be a little inaccuracy of expression has occurred with most theological writers, whether Calvinistic or Arminian, in reference to this point. It has generally been represented that conviction constitutes a part of repentance. Mr. Watson, than whom we believe a more discriminating divine, and one more critically correct, has never written, in speaking of repentance, uses, in his *Biblical Dictionary*, the following words: — "Taken in a religious sense, it signifies conviction of sin and sorrow for it." Now, that *conviction* must necessarily precede repentance, and is indispensable to its existence, we readily concede; but that it constitutes a part of repentance, we think is so palpably unscriptural, that it is a little surprising that critical divines should so generally have passed over this point in such haste as to adopt the inaccuracy of expression in which, as we have seen, the penetrating Watson has, though inadvertently we believe, followed them. That conviction cannot be a part of repentance, we may clearly see when we reflect that God has never promised to repent for any man; "God is not the son of man that he should *repent*," but he "has commanded *all men* everywhere to *repent*." Again; conviction is a work which the Lord performs by the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is promised "to reprove (or convict) the world of sin," &c. Now, we see from these passages, as well as from the whole tenor of Scripture, that God is the agent who convicts, and man is the agent who, under that conviction, and through Divine grace, is called upon to repent. God has never commanded us to convict our-

selves; but he has commanded us to repent. Hence we infer that conviction constitutes no part of repentance. Again; that conviction cannot be a part of repentance is clear, not only from the definitions quoted from Scott and Watson, but also from the etymology of the word *repent*, as already shown. According to all these, "repentance is a sorrow for sin," &c. Now, "sorrow for sin" is not conviction, but an effect of conviction. Conviction, unless resisted, results in repentance; it leads to it, but does not constitute a part of it.

2. Again; we would observe that contrition, the first part of repentance, when not stifled or resisted by the sinner, results in and leads to reformation, the second part of repentance. This may be seen from the words of the apostle in 2 Cor. vii. 10. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." Some have concluded from this passage that "godly sorrow" cannot be a part of repentance, because it is said to "work repentance;" and "repentance," say they, "cannot be said to work or produce itself." This seems to be rather a play upon words. We readily admit that a thing cannot be both effect and cause, at the same time and in the same sense; and, consequently, in this acceptance, repentance cannot be the cause of itself. But one part of repentance may be the cause of the other; and this we believe is the clear meaning of the passage quoted. "Godly sorrow," that is, contrition, or the first part of repentance, "worketh," or leadeth to the second part of repentance; that is, the completion of repentance, or, as it is expressed in the text, "repentance to salvation." Although "godly sorrow" is repentance begun, yet no repentance is "repentance to salvation" till it is completed; or till it extends to a thorough reformation of heart and life. Hence we say with propriety, that repentance begun worketh repentance completed; or, which is the same thing, "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."

3. Repentance presupposes the sinful condition of man. "A just person needeth no repentance." As none can repent of their sins till they are first convicted, so none can be convicted of sin but such as have sinned. The general position here assumed, that sinners, and such only, are proper subjects for repentance, is clear from the Scriptures. One or two quotations may be allowed. In Matt. ix. 13, the Saviour says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but *sinners*, to repentance." In Luke xiii. 2, 3, "Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were *sinners* above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish." Here the argument is, that as all are sinners, therefore they must repent, or perish.

4. The last question we shall discuss concerning the nature of

repentance, relates to its connection with faith and regeneration. Upon this subject, between Calvinists generally, and Arminians, there is a great difference of sentiment. But this difference relates not to the abstract, but to the relative nature of repentance. They agree with regard to what repentance is, considered in itself; but differ with regard to its relative character as connected with faith and regeneration. The Calvinistic doctrine is, that faith and repentance both flow necessarily from, and are always preceded by, regeneration. The Calvinistic view on this subject is clearly presented in Buck's Dictionary, thus:—1. "Regeneration is the work of God enlightening the mind and changing the heart, and in order of time precedes faith. 2. Faith is the consequence of regeneration, and implies the perception of an object. It discerns the evil of sin, the holiness of God, gives credence to the testimony of God in his word, and seems to precede repentance, since we cannot repent of that of which we have no clear perception, or no concern about. 3. Repentance is an after thought, or sorrowing for sin, the evil nature of which faith perceives, and which immediately follows faith. Conversion is a turning from sin, which faith sees, and repentance sorrows for; and seems to follow, and to be the end of all the rest."—(Buck's Dict., Art. Faith.) Here we see that, according to the above, which is the view of Calvinists generally, there is, in reference to these graces, in point of time, the following order:—1. Regeneration. 2. Faith. 3. Repentance. 4. Conversion.

Arminians think the Scriptures present a different order on this subject. They contend, that, so far from repentance and faith being preceded by regeneration, and flowing from it, they precede, and are conditions of regeneration. But our business in the present lecture is with the subject of repentance. We shall endeavor to show that it precedes both saving faith and regeneration.

Now observe, we do not contend that repentance precedes the enlightening, and to some extent the quickening, influence of the Holy Spirit, and some degree of faith; but we do contend that repentance precedes justifying faith and the new birth, which constitute an individual a new creature, or a child of God.

We shall examine this subject in the light of Scripture.

1. It appears evident from the total depravity of human nature, as taught in Scripture, that the soul must first be visited by the convicting grace of God, and that a degree of faith must be produced before the first step can be taken toward salvation. This we find also clearly taught in the word of God. In Heb. xi. 6, we read, "But without *faith* it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must *believe that he is*, and that *he is a rewarder* of them that diligently seek him." To

show that at least a degree of conviction and of faith must necessarily precede evangelical repentance, many other texts might be adduced; but as this is a point which will scarcely be disputed, we deem the above sufficient. We proceed now to show that evangelical repentance precedes justifying faith and regeneration. It should, however, be remembered, that we do not contend that there is no repentance after faith and regeneration. It is freely admitted that repentance may and does continue, in some sense and to some extent, as long as there are remains of sin in the soul, or perhaps as long as the soul continues in the body; for even if we suppose the soul to be "cleansed from all sin," a sorrowful remembrance of past sins, which constitutes one part of repentance, may still be properly exercised. But the point of controversy is not whether repentance may succeed, but whether it precedes justifying faith and regeneration. A few passages of Scripture, we think, may determine the question.

2. The general custom with the sacred writers, wherever repentance is spoken of in connection with faith or regeneration, is to place repentance first. Thus we read, Acts xx. 21: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give *repentance* to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*." Mark i. 15. "*Repent* ye, and *believe* the gospel." In these passages *repentance* is placed *before faith* and *forgiveness*. Now, although we would not rest our argument simply on the fact that repentance is placed invariably foremost by the inspired writers, yet, upon the supposition that it is always preceded by faith and regeneration, it would be difficult to account for the general observance of this order in the Scriptures. Again; the Scriptures frequently speak of repentance as the first step or commencement of religion. The dispensation of John the Baptist was introductory or preparatory to the gospel; and his preaching was emphatically the doctrine of repentance. He called on the people to repent, and be baptized with "the baptism of repentance," and this was to prepare the way for Christ: — to prepare the people by repentance for the reception of the gospel by faith. In Heb. vi. 1, we read, "Not laying again the *foundation of repentance* from dead works, and of faith toward God." Here repentance is not only placed before faith, but it is spoken of as the "foundation," or commencement, in religion.

In Acts ii. 38, St. Peter says, "*Repent*, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the *remission of sins*, and ye shall receive *the gift of the Holy Ghost*." These persons could not have been regenerated believers, for if so, their sins must have been already remitted; but they were commanded to "repent and be bap

tized," in order to remission. Hence it is clear that with them repentance preceded remission; but as remission always accompanies faith and regeneration, their repentance must have preceded faith and regeneration. It is said in Matt. xxi. 32, "And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye *might believe* him." Here repentance is presented as a necessary antecedent of faith. Quotations on this point might be greatly extended, but we will add but one text more. In Acts iii. 19. "*Repent* ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Here, repentance, so far from being presented as "an after-thought," following saving faith and regeneration, is presented as one of the conditions in order to remission; and, consequently, in order to faith and regeneration.

We would here simply add, that the Calvinistic scheme, in requiring regeneration and justifying faith to precede repentance, appears to be not only uncountenanced by the general tenor of Scripture, but is likewise seriously objectionable on other grounds. As "all men, everywhere," are "commanded to repent," and that, not after they shall become regenerated, but "now,"—at this moment,—it follows either that they are commanded to do what God knows they cannot do, or that repentance may precede regeneration. Once more; as all men are required to repent, and warned that "except they repent, they shall perish," it follows, that if they cannot repent till they are first regenerated, and if regeneration be a work in which "the sinner is passive," as the Calvinists teach, then the finally impenitent may urge a fair excuse for neglecting to repent;—they may say, "Truly we never repented, but we are not to blame; repentance could not precede regeneration, and we were compelled to wait for thy regenerating grace." We deem it useless to pursue this subject further. We have endeavored to illustrate the nature of repentance, both by considering what it implies in the abstract, and by noticing its relation to faith and regeneration.

II. Our second proposition is, to consider the means of repentance. In contemplating this subject, we would here endeavor to guard against presumption on the one hand, and despair on the other. By the former, we may be led to look upon repentance as a work of our own, that we may fully accomplish by the unassisted exercise of our own powers; and thus we may be led to despise the proffered grace of the gospel, and by scornfully rejecting the aid of Heaven, be left to perish in our sins. By the latter, we may be led to look upon repentance as a work of God alone, in reference to which, the efforts of man are perfectly useless; and thus we may be led to repose our consciences upon the downy pillow of care-

less indifference, and yield ourselves up to the seducing slumbers of sin, till the door of repentance shall be closed against us forever. A correct understanding of this subject will tend to preserve us from danger from either extreme; and while it will ascribe all "the excellency of the power," in repentance to God, it will place before man, in its proper light, his appropriate duty. To suppose that the carnal mind can turn itself to God, and by its own innate, underived energy, work out "repentance unto salvation," is to set aside the doctrine of human depravity, and contradict those Scriptures which refer to God as the author of repentance. To suppose that man can have no agency whatever in the work of repentance, is to deny his responsibility for his actions, and discard those Scriptures which call upon "all men, everywhere, to repent." It is very true, God is the author of all evangelical repentance. He is said "to give" and "to grant repentance;" but, in the same sense, he is the author of all good; for every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the "Father of lights." God giveth or granteth repentance in the same sense in which he giveth us health in our bodies, or the rich harvest in our fields. None, however, are so foolish as to expect these blessings in the neglect of the means. Do men refuse medicine when they are sick, because God is the author of health; or refuse to sow or to plough, because the harvest is the gift of God? In reference to these things, men do not reason with such folly. Why, then, should any excuse themselves from the duty of repentance, because it is said to be a gift or grant from the Lord? The truth is, that although God is the author of repentance, yet he confers that blessing according to a certain plan; and such as use the prescribed means have the promise that they shall attain unto the proposed end. What are those means?

1. The first that we shall notice is *serious reflection*. The sinful multitude, immersed in worldly pursuits,—allured by the "fictitious trappings of honor, the imposing charms of wealth, or the impious banquets of pleasure,"—seldom take time to listen to the voice of religion. Moses laments over the thoughtlessness of an ungodly race, saying, "O that they were wise, that they *understood* this; that they would *consider* their latter end." The Lord himself exhibits against his forgetful Israel the following solemn accusation, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not *consider*." So it has been in every age; the first difficulty in the way of the messenger of salvation has been to arouse and engage the serious attention of the careless sinner. Our holy religion "commends itself to every man's conscience," and will command homage, if once it gain attention. The first thing, therefore, to be accomplished, if we would

repent of our sins, is seriously to "consider our ways." Let us pause in our headlong rush to destruction, and ponder the paths of our feet; let us give to the religion of Christ that consideration which its importance demands, and to our own conduct that honest reflection which its nature requires, and the impression will be such as is calculated to lead to repentance.

✓ 2. The next means of repentance which we would notice is *self-examination*. To repent of our sins, we must first see and feel them. The man must know that he is diseased, before he will send for the physician; even so, we must so examine our hearts and lives as to discover that we are indeed sinners, before we will cry, "Lord, save, or we perish." We should so examine ourselves in the light of God's truth as to bring up to our view not only our flagrant transgressions, our outward and more daring crimes, but also our secret faults, our more hidden sins. We should probe the soul to the very centre, and bring out to view its naked deformity,—its exceeding sinfulness. Well has it been said,

"Sin is a monster of such frightful mien,
Which, to be hated, needs but to be seen."

Even so, could we but so examine our hearts and lives as to array our sins before us in all their turpitude, we would be led to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips." We would be led to "abhor ourselves, and to repent in dust and ashes." But there is, perhaps, no work in which the sinner can engage, more irksome to the feelings than self-examination. As if conscious of our fearful delinquencies, we shun the investigation, lest we should be "weighed in the balances, and found wanting."

✓ 3. The next means of repentance which we shall notice is *meditation on the goodness of God*. St. Paul says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Such is the gracious arrangement of a merciful God, that those inducements which are the best calculated to enlist our attention and engage our affections, are presented us in the gospel. Our hopes and our fears, our affections and our aversions, our reason, judgment and conscience, are all addressed. But perhaps no emotion is more sweetly captivating to the better feelings of the soul than *gratitude*. When is it that the child with most emotion dwells upon the character and the actions of a dear departed parent? It is when busy memory calls up to the freshness of life a thousand acts of kindness and affection. When the tender sympathies and watchful concern, which none but a father or a mother can feel, are brought up to our minds as from the solemn grave, then it is that we feel the obligations of gratitude; then

the last pious admonition of a departed parent rushes upon the memory and subdues the heart, with an eloquence surpassing the power of the most pathetic sermon. But if earthly parents, by the ten thousand benefits which we derive from them, can have claims on our gratitude, how much greater are the claims of our Heavenly Father! The "goodness and mercy of the Lord have followed us all the days of our lives." We read his mercy in all his works. It is written upon every leaf, and wafted upon every breeze. It glows in every star, and sparkles in every brook. But, above all, in the unspeakable gift of Christ, in his sufferings and death for our sins, we behold, beyond the power of language to tell, the love of God to us. A consideration of this glorious theme should lead us to repentance. Hard, indeed, must be the heart, and fiend-like the soul, that can contemplate such a debt of love, and feel no pang in offending against such goodness. Meditation on the goodness of the Lord should lead us to repentance.

4. As the fourth and last means to aid us in the duty of repentance, I would refer to *an ardent looking to God, and dependence upon him, in faith and prayer*. In vain may the husbandman plough or sow, unless the fruitful season be given by the Lord. Even so, all our efforts are vain, without the Divine blessing upon them. Yet we need not be discouraged, for God hath promised,—“Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” And again, “Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” We should “come boldly unto a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find” the grace of repentance, that we may live.

III. As the *third* and *last* division of our subject, we would briefly notice the necessity of repentance.

The broad and comprehensive ground on which the necessity of repentance is based, is most forcibly expressed in Scripture in the following sentence:—“Except ye repent, *ye shall all likewise perish*.” Here is the ground of its necessity. Without repentance, we can have no hope of happiness. We must inevitably perish. There are, however, various considerations upon which the truth of this proposition is based. A few of these we shall now briefly notice.

1. *It results from the nature of that law against which we have sinned, and under whose curse we have fallen*. Had we violated a law like many of the statutes of earthly monarchs, unreasonable or unjust in its requirements, a righteous administration might remit the penalty, without the requirement of repentance. But the Divine law which we have transgressed, required no unreasonable service. It is “holy, just, and good.” In sinning against such a law, the eternal fitness of things,—

the immutable principles of equity and justice, demand the infliction of condign punishment. Hence, without repentance, we can no more hope to escape the sentence of justice, than we can expect the very throne of heaven to be shaken, and the government of God demolished.

2. *The necessity of repentance appears from the very nature of sin.* What is sin, both in its essence and consequences? It is direct rebellion against God. It is a renunciation of allegiance to our Maker. It is a surrender of our powers to the service of the grand enemy of God and man; and it brings upon the soul that derangement and contamination of all its powers, which utterly disqualify for the service and enjoyment of God. It is an axiom of eternal truth, that we "cannot serve God and Mammon." We cannot, at the same time, serve the devil, the source and fountain of all evil, and the Lord Jehovah, the source and fountain of all good and of all happiness. To be prepared for the service of God here, for those devout and holy exercises which religion requires, we must renounce the service of sin and Satan. We must "cast off the works of darkness," before we are prepared to "put on the armor of light." And how, we ask, even if we were not required to serve God here, could we be prepared, with hearts which are "enmity to God," and polluted souls, "desperately wicked," to enter upon the high and holy employment of the blood-washed sons of light? How could such rebellious and polluted spirits participate in the heavenly raptures and ceaseless hosannas that thrill the hearts of the countless millions of the redeemed, and swell the symphonies of heaven? Surely, an impenitent and polluted soul can have no congeniality of nature or of feeling for heavenly bliss. We must, therefore, repent, or we never can enter the mansions of the blessed.

3. Our last proof for the necessity of repentance is based upon *the express declaration of the word of God*. "God, that cannot lie," hath declared, "Except ye repent, *ye shall all likewise perish.*" "All men everywhere are commanded to repent." Such, therefore, as refuse to obey this command, can have no hope in a coming day. As certain as God is true, their final doom to endless misery is fixed. God "shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on" impenitent sinners, "who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus have we considered the *nature*, the *means*, and the *necessity* of repentance. May the Lord give us "repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." Amen!

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Does Repentance occupy a prominent place in Scripture?</p> <p>2. Was it taught by the prophets?</p> <p>3. By John the Baptist?</p> <p>4. Into what three parts is the lecture divided?</p> <p>5. What two Greek words of the New Testament are rendered <i>repent</i>?</p> <p>6. What is the meaning of each?</p> <p>7. Which word is generally used for evangelical repentance in the New Testament?</p> <p>8. In what two things does evangelical repentance consist?</p> <p>9. How is it defined by Scott and Watson?</p> <p>10. Does <i>conviction</i> constitute a part of repentance?</p> <p>11. Does repentance <i>presuppose</i> conviction?</p> <p>12. Does conviction <i>necessarily</i> result in repentance?</p> <p>13. Is <i>godly sorrow</i> a part of repentance?</p> <p>14. To what character is repentance appropriate?</p> <p>15. What is the connection between repentance, and faith and regeneration?</p> <p>16. What is the Calvinistic view?</p> <p>17. How is it proved, that repentance pre-</p> | <p>cedes justifying faith and regeneration?</p> <p>18. Upon what other grounds is the Calvinistic view objectionable?</p> <p>19. In reference to the <i>means</i> of repentance, wherein is there danger of <i>despair</i>, and of <i>presumption</i>?</p> <p>20. How is this guarded?</p> <p>21. What is the first <i>means</i> given?</p> <p>22. What is the second?</p> <p>23. The third?</p> <p>24. The fourth?</p> <p>25. Upon what is the necessity of repentance based?</p> <p>26. What is the first proof of this?</p> <p>27. The second?</p> <p>28. The third?</p> <p>29. What kind of repentance may we suppose Judas had?</p> <p>30. What is meant when it is said that the Lord repented?</p> <p>31. Can an individual repent without <i>any degree</i> of faith?</p> <p>32. Does repentance continue <i>after justification</i>?</p> <p>33. In what sense may a <i>sanctified person</i> repent?</p> |
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LECTURE XXII.

FAITH.

FAITH, the subject now proposed for discussion, is one of the most prominent and important doctrines of the Bible. We find it presented in almost every part of both the Old and New Testament; and it occupies a conspicuous place under the patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations. It appears in the confessions and standards of all Christian denominations; and has been extensively discussed by theological writers in every age. From all these considerations, as well as from the intimate connection between faith and salvation which the Scriptures exhibit, we might be led to infer that it is a subject well understood, and one in reference to which Christians are generally agreed. But such is far from being the case. The discordant systems of theology which men have adopted have produced a great diversity of sentiment on the subject of faith; and many of the different denominations, and perhaps some in all, are either under the influence of sentiments exceedingly erroneous, or have no clear and satisfactory views in reference to this important doctrine.

We propose, in the present lecture, to examine with as much care, and present with as much clearness, as our ability will allow, the various aspects of this doctrine, as exhibited in Holy Writ.

I. The Greek word rendered *faith* in the New Testament is *πιστις*, from the verb *πειθω*, which means *to persuade*. Therefore, the proper definition of faith, according to the etymology of the word, is, *belief of the truth*; or, *that persuasion by which a proposition is received as true*. This is the general meaning of the term; and whatever modifications it may receive, or whatever different aspects it may properly assume, the Scriptures themselves must determine. Let it, however, be borne in mind, that the above is the proper meaning of the word; and however much it may be qualified, limited, or extended in signification, according to the peculiar aspect in which the subject may be presented in Scripture, it cannot be understood in any sense contradictory to the above. It must imply the belief of the truth; but it may imply this to a greater or less degree, and under a diversity of circumstances.

In perfect consistency with the literal meaning of the term, we are

furnished with a definition of faith by the apostle Paul in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The Greek word *ὑποστασις*, here rendered *substance*, is, by Macknight and other critics, rendered *confidence*; and we find the same original word in Heb. iii. 14, rendered *confidence* in the common translation. This perfectly accords with the etymological meaning of faith above given. That is, faith is the *belief*, or the *confidence*, — the *strong persuasion* of the truth or reality of things hoped for. In the latter clause of the verse, the word *ελεγχος*, rendered *evidence*, is, by many critics, translated *conviction*. It signifies, a *strict proof* or *demonstration*. The apostle's definition of faith, therefore, may be stated as follows: — *Faith is the strong persuasion and clear demonstration of things hoped for, and of things invisible.*

With these remarks concerning the general definition of faith, we proceed to the further investigation of the doctrine, as presented in the Scriptures.

1. At the very commencement of the investigation we are met by a question upon which has originated much controversy among theologians, in different ages of the church: "Is faith the gift of God, or is it the act of the creature?" This question, which is far from being free from ambiguity in itself, has been thrust forth by many as a kind of talisman for the detection of heresy; — as something possessing extraordinary powers, by which the orthodoxy of an individual may at once be tested. And with many persons, assuming high claims to soundness in the faith, what they conceived to be an improper answer to the above question, has furnished legitimate grounds for non-fellowship or excommunication. We think, however, it will be seen, upon a slight examination, that the question itself needs explanation, before any inference of serious importance can be made from the answer. The proper answer to the question must depend upon the meaning attached to the terms used. The words "gift of God," and "act of the creature," may be taken in a diversity of acceptations. Thus the manna which fed the Israelites in the wilderness, and the rich harvest produced by the field of Boaz, were both the gift of God; but no one can say that they were the "gift of God" in the same sense. In the former case, the gift was absolute and direct from heaven, without the agency of man. In the latter case, the agency of man was required for the cultivation of the field. Likewise, there are different senses in which a thing may be understood to be "an act of the creature." Thus, what Saul of Tarsus did, when he "held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen," and what the "man with the withered hand" did, when, at the bidding of Christ, he "stretched forth his hand," were both acts of the

creature; but no one can say that they were such in the same sense. In the former case, an act was performed in the exercise of the native powers, without the assistance of Divine grace. In the latter case, the act was performed by the assistance of Divine aid imparted at the time. We will now endeavor to determine in what sense "faith is the gift of God," and in what sense it is the act of the creature.

(1.) According to the Antinomian theory, faith is the gift of God in the same sense in which the manna from heaven, above referred to, was such. That is, Antinomians understand that faith is a grace, or a something possessing an abstract existence, as separate and distinct from the existence and operations of the believer, as the manna in question was from the existence and operations of the people who gathered and used it. This has been the avowed sentiment of Antinomian Calvinists in the last and present century; and, indeed, it is difficult for any interpretation of the subject essentially variant from this, to be reconciled with Calvinism even in the mildest forms it has assumed. An idea so absurd and unscriptural as the above, and which has been so frequently disproved by arguments perfectly unanswerable, requires, on the present occasion, but a brief notice. Suffice it to say, that, according to the above notion of faith, to call upon men to believe, and to hold them responsible for their unbelief, would be just as consistent with reason and Scripture, as to call upon them to stop the planets in their course, and to hold them responsible for the rotation of the seasons. Such view of the subject is not only inconsistent with the whole tenor of Scripture, which enjoins upon man the exercise of faith as a duty, but it is irreconcilable with the very nature of faith. What is faith? It is no abstract entity which God has treasured up in the magazines of heaven, to be conveyed down to man without any agency of his, as the olive leaf was borne to the window of the ark by Noah's dove. Faith has no existence in the abstract. We might as well suppose that there can be thought without an intelligent being to think, as that faith can exist separate from the agent who believes. Faith is the act of believing; it is an exercise of the mind; and, in the very nature of things, must be dependent on the agency of the believer for its existence. There is, however, a sense in which we think faith may with propriety be called the gift of God. What we have already said is sufficient to show that it cannot be the gift of God in such sense as to exclude the appropriate means, or the proper agency of man. The doings and the gifts of God may be performed or imparted either directly or indirectly. God may carry on his works and confer his favors either directly by the exertion of his own immediate agency, or indirectly by the employment of such agencies or instrumentalities as his wisdom may select. Thus

the harvest, which has been the product of much toil on the part of the husbandman, is really the gift of God, though not so directly as the manna from heaven, or even "the showers that water the earth." Whatsoever is the result of a merciful arrangement of God, although our own agency may be requisite to our enjoyment of the blessing, is, in an important sense, the gift of God. For example, the sight of external objects results from a merciful arrangement of God, by which the surrounding rays of light are adapted to the organization of the human eye. Thus sight may be called the gift of God, but not so as to exclude human agency; for we may either open or close our eyes at pleasure; we may look upward to the stars or downward to the earth; we may turn to the right or left at will. Even so faith results from a merciful arrangement of God, not independent of, but in connection with, the free moral agency of man. It is of God's merciful arrangement that we are presented with a Saviour, the proper object of faith; that we have access to his word and gospel, unfolding the plan of salvation, and exhibiting the subject matter of faith; that we are presented with the proper evidences of the truth of our holy religion, serving as the ground or reason of our faith; that we have minds and hearts susceptible of Divine illumination and gracious influence, enabling us to engage in the exercise of faith; and, lastly, that the gracious influence, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is vouchsafed unto us, by which we may, in the exercise of the ability which God giveth, in connection with all these privileges, "believe to the salvation of our souls." In reference to all these particulars, so far as they are connected with, or enter into, the composition of faith, it is properly the gift of God. And as God is the proper "author and finisher of our faith," because it is thus through his merciful arrangement, and by the aid of Divine grace imparted, that we are enabled to believe, we may, therefore, say with propriety, that in these acceptations faith is the gift of God. But all this is far from admitting that faith is in no sense the act of the creature. Indeed, that it is the act of the creature, in an important sense, is implied clearly in what we have just presented. For, after all that God has done, man must act,—his agency must be put forth, or faith cannot exist. Not that he can, of himself, do any good thing; his "sufficiency is of God;" but "through Christ strengthening him," he can and must exert an agency in believing. God has never promised to believe for any man; nor can any man ever possess faith till through grace he exercise the ability with which God has endowed him. From what has been said, we think it evident wherein faith is both the gift of God and the act of the creature. It may be objected by some, that, according to the view presented, it is an inaccuracy to term faith the

gift of God ; for it is only the grace and ability to believe that are the gift of God ; and this grace and ability are not faith, but something distinct from it, and from which it results. To which we reply, that, although it is true that the grace and ability to believe are not faith, yet, as faith results from the exercise of that grace and ability, and flows from that merciful arrangement of God by which man is enabled to believe, we think there is the same propriety in styling faith the gift of God that there is for so considering the food we eat, and the raiment we put on, for the security of which our agency in the use of the appropriate means is indispensably requisite.

Perhaps, after all we have said, some may yet think there are a few passages of Scripture which seem to present faith as the gift of God, to the exclusion of the agency of the creature. The two texts principally relied on for that purpose we will briefly notice. The first is Col. ii. 12, where it is said, "Ye are risen with him through the faith *of the operation of God.*" Here, it is true, faith is said to be "of the operation of God." But does this imply that the agency of the creature is excluded? Surely not. God is said to "work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" yet we are commanded to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." According to the scheme we have presented concerning the connection of the gift of God with the agency of man in the work of faith, these texts are perfectly consistent with each other; but if we interpret the one so as to make faith the gift of God independent of man's agency, the other can only be interpreted in direct opposition. The next text relied upon is Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Doddridge and other commentators of the Calvinistic school, take the relative *τοῦτο*, *that*, to refer to *πιστις*, *faith*, for its antecedent; and thereby make the apostle to say directly, that faith is "the gift of God." But Chandler, Macknight, Clarke, and many of the best critics, contend that *τοῦτο*, which is neuter gender, cannot naturally refer to *πιστις*, which is feminine; but that the antecedent is the preceding part of the sentence, or the salvation spoken of as being "by grace and through faith." Macknight has supplied *το γεγονός*, *this affair*, as the antecedent; that is, "this salvation by grace and through faith is not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." So that we may be well satisfied that this passage affirms nothing in reference to the question whether faith is the gift of God or not. But even if it did, it cannot invalidate the view of the subject which we have presented; for we have shown wherein it is the gift of God, and wherein it is the act of the creature.

2. The next point which we would present for consideration is *the progressive nature of faith.*

According to the Scriptures, there are degrees in faith. Faith may not only take a more extensive range in relation to the things embraced, but the degree of confidence with which they are embraced may also be increased. In Matt. vi. 30, our Saviour addresses his disciples, saying, "O ye of *little* faith." In Matt. viii. 10, he says, in reference to the centurion's faith, "I have not found *so great* faith, no, not in Israel." Here, "little faith," and "great faith," are both spoken of; hence it must consist of degrees. In Matt. xvii. 20, the disciples are exhorted to "have faith as a grain of mustard-seed;" clearly implying, that like as that diminutive seed grows to a large tree, so their faith should expand and increase more and more. In Luke xvii. 5, we find the disciples praying, "Lord, *increase* our faith;" clearly implying that it might become greater than it was. In Rom. i. 17, we read, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed *from faith to faith*." This can only be understood to mean from one degree of faith to another. In 2 Thess. i. 3, Paul says to his brethren, "Your faith *groweth exceedingly*." And in 2 Cor. x. 15, the apostle says to his brethren, "But having hope, when your faith *is increased*," &c. From all which passages the idea is clearly taught that there are degrees in faith; but, as this is a point so plain as scarcely to admit of controversy, we dismiss it without further comment.

3. We would next consider *the channel through which faith is derived*. This is the *hearing of the word*. In Rom. x. 14—17, the apostle says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, *faith cometh by hearing*, and hearing by the word of God." The great appositiveness of the above passage to the point in hand will justify the length of the quotation. That the hearing of the word is the medium of faith, will further appear from the following passages. In John xvii. 20, our Saviour says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me *through their word*." John xx. 30, 31. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But *these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*." Many other texts, having the same general bearing, might be added; but the above will show that the hearing of the gospel, or the acquiring of

the knowledge of the great truths of God's word, is the appointed channel of saving faith.

4. In the next place, we would remark, that faith is not a blind assent of the mind, resting upon no rational foundation ; but it is *a well grounded conviction, and a reasonable confidence, based upon good and sufficient evidence*. God has never enjoined upon man the duty of faith, without first presenting before him a reasonable foundation for the same. Christ never arbitrarily assumed the prerogatives of the Messiahship, but he appealed, for the confirmation of his claims, to honorable and weighty testimony ; nor are we required to believe the gospel, independent of the evidence it affords of its own divinity. The proper ground or reason of faith will appear from the following Scriptures. John x. 37, 38. "If I *do not the works* of my Father, believe me not. But if I *do*, though ye believe not me, *believe the works* ; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." John v. 36. "But I have greater witness than that of John ; for *the works* which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Heb. ii. 3, 4. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?" 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In all these Scriptures, the proper evidences are appealed to as the foundation of faith.

5. Faith, by theological writers, has been divided into different kinds, such as Divine Faith, Human Faith, Historical Faith, the Faith of Miracles, Justifying Faith, &c. A particular explanation of each of these kinds of faith we deem unnecessary, as the terms in which they are expressed are sufficiently explicit. We will close the present lecture by a special consideration of that faith, which in the gospel is presented as saving or justifying in its nature. St. Paul declares the gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one *that believeth* : " and he said to the jailer, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" These passages clearly exhibit that prominent feature of the

gospel,—that faith is connected with salvation. The point now before us is to inquire what is implied in that faith.

We know of but two leading views in reference to the nature or degree of the faith in question.

The first is a notion which has found favor with Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, &c., in different ages of the church; and in modern times, also, with the Rationalists of Germany, and with some new-school Presbyterians and some classes of Baptists of the United States. The view referred to is this:—*that the faith which the gospel enjoins is simply the assent of the mind, or a mental conviction of the truth of the facts and doctrines of the gospel, resulting from an examination and intellectual apprehension of the evidences of Christianity, without any direct communication of supernatural aid or Divine influence, or any trust or reliance of the soul on Christ, further than what is necessarily implied in the conviction produced in the understanding by rational investigation, that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and that the gospel is true.*

The other view upon this subject is that which has been advocated by the great body of orthodox Christians in all ages. It embraces all that is implied in the preceding definition, together with *a special trust or reliance of the soul on Christ for salvation, further than what is implied in the simple assent of the understanding.*

The former view, it will be perceived, reduces the exercise of faith to a mere intellectual process; the latter, in addition to this, requires a trust or reliance of the heart. The vital importance of settling this question correctly must be apparent to every one. It is intimately connected with the salvation of the soul. A mistake here may be fatal; and certainly no one can be interested in being in error where so much is at stake. We think the honest inquirer after truth may easily find in the inspired volume a satisfactory decision on the point at issue.

1. Our first argument on this point is based upon what is said in reference to the faith of devils. St. James, in speaking of a dead, inoperative faith, which can only imply the assent of the understanding to the truth of Scripture, says, "The devils also *believe* and tremble." In accordance with this is the language of a devil, when our Lord was about to expel him from the man possessed: "I *know thee* who thou art; the Holy One of God." Thus it appears, that, so far as theoretical faith is concerned, the devils are possessed of faith; and if the gospel only required of men the belief of the truth with the understanding, it would but enjoin the faith of devils; but as we suppose none will admit that the faith which justifies the sinner is such as devils possess, we infer that justifying faith must imply more than the bare assent of the understanding. If gospel faith be the assent of the understanding only, we

may, with propriety, ask, who is a stronger believer than Satan himself?

2. It appears from the Scriptures that many were convinced, in their understandings, of the Messiahship of Christ, and of the truth of the gospel, who, nevertheless, did not "believe to the saving of their souls." As instances of such, we might name Nicodemus and Simon Magus. We have the faith of the former in the following orthodox confession:—"We *know* that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do *these miracles* that thou doest, except God be with him." Here, so far as the mere mental conviction of the truth is concerned, it would be difficult to invalidate the faith of Nicodemus. He acknowledged the divinity of the Saviour's mission, and he based his faith on the proper evidence,—"*the miracles*" the Saviour performed. Yet he was not saved; for the Saviour declares unto him, "Ye must be born again."

And what can we think of Simon Magus? In the eighth chapter of the Acts, we learn that "Simon himself *believed* also," and "was baptized." That is, he "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." Yet, immediately afterwards, he is said to have "neither part nor lot in the matter;" but to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Yet there is no charge brought against the orthodoxy of his belief; it is not intimated that his mind was not informed in reference to the character and claims of Christ; or that his understanding was not convinced of the truth of what he had heard. The charge affects not his understanding or his reasoning, but his moral character. The apostle declares, "*Thy heart* is not right in the sight of God." The defect was evidently in the heart, and not in the head. So far as the mere assent of the understanding is concerned, it does not appear that there was any defect in the faith of Nicodemus or Simon Magus; but, as neither of them believed "to the saving of the soul," we fairly infer that gospel faith implies more than a mental conviction of the truth from the force of testimony. The head may be as orthodox, and at the same time the heart as wicked, as Satan himself.

3. *The Scriptures explicitly present justifying faith as implying trust or reliance, as well as mental assent.* Ps. xxii. 4. "Our fathers *trusted* in thee: they *trusted*, and thou didst deliver them." This is evidently the character of the faith by which "the elders obtained a good report." Again; St. Paul says, "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness;" clearly implying that faith reaches beyond the mere intellect, and lays hold on the moral powers. In Eph. i. 12, we read, "That we should be to the praise of his glory who first *trusted* in Christ," &c. Here, the apostle is evidently speaking of embracing Christ by saving

faith; and he expresses it by the word *trust*; implying more than the cold assent of the mind. Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." "It is not surely that we may merely believe that the death of Christ is a sacrifice for sin, that he is set forth as a propitiation, but that we may trust in its efficacy. It is not that we may merely believe that God has made promises to us, that his merciful engagements in our favor are recorded, but that we may have confidence in them, and thus be supported by them. This was the faith of the saints of the Old Testament. 'By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went.' His faith was confidence. 'Though he slay me, yet will I *trust* in him.' 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord? let him *trust* in the name of the Lord, and *stay* upon his God.' 'Blessed is the man that *trusteth* in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.' It is under this notion of trust that faith is continually represented to us also in the New Testament. 'In his name shall the Gentiles *trust*.' 'For, therefore, we both labor and suffer reproach, because we *trust* in the living God,' &c. 'For I know whom I have believed,' (trusted,) &c. 'If we hold the beginning of our *confidence* steadfast unto the end.'"—(Watson's Institutes.)

In the last place, we would remark, that the notion that saving or justifying faith implies no more than the assent of the understanding, resulting from the force of testimony, is encumbered by serious difficulties, in view of reason, experience, and the general tenor of revelation.

1. From this doctrine it would follow, either that all whose judgments were convinced of the truth of Christianity, by Christ and his apostles, immediately embraced salvation; or, some genuine believers were not saved. The former position is contrary to the historic fact; the latter is contrary to the gospel promise.

2. This doctrine appears to be inconsistent with the depravity and the native inability of man to do anything toward salvation, without Divine grace imparted. For if faith be the condition of salvation, as all admit, and if it be the natural result of a mental exercise in the examination of testimony, then it will follow, that, as man can exercise his intellect at pleasure, independent of aid from Divine influence, he may believe of himself, and be saved by the mere exercise of his natural powers. According to this idea, to pray for faith, or for the increase of faith, would be absurd; for all that would be necessary would be an increase of diligence in the study of the evidences of Christianity, which might be effected as well without prayer as with it.

Again; this view of the subject would imply that no man can examine the evidences of Christianity so as to perceive their force, and study the doctrines of revelation so as to gain a general theoretical knowledge of their character, without being an evangelical believer or genuine Christian. This is contrary to the experience of thousands. To say that no man in Christendom has ever examined the evidences of Christianity so as to arrive at the satisfactory conclusion in his mind that the gospel is true, except such as have embraced salvation, is to manifest a far greater regard for a favorite theory than for the plain testimony of experience, observation, and Scripture. The great Bible truth is, that man is a being possessed of moral as well as intellectual powers. He has a heart as well as a head; and God requires both in the exercise of evangelical faith. That faith which has its seat in the *head*, without reaching the heart, will never reform the life or save the soul. It will be as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal;" it may embrace "the form," but will be destitute of "the power" of religion. The faith which consists in the assent of the understanding alone is the "dead faith" spoken of by St. James, which includes no works of obedience. The faith which, passing through the understanding, fixes its seat deep in the heart, and trusts or relies on Christ for present salvation, is that faith which alone can justify and save a sinful soul.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Is faith a prominent subject in Scripture?</p> <p>2. Is it a subject well understood?</p> <p>3. What is its etymological meaning?</p> <p>4. What is implied in St. Paul's definition?</p> <p>5. In what sense is faith the <i>gift of God</i>?</p> <p>6. In what sense is it the <i>act of the creature</i>?</p> <p>7. In what sense do Antinomians hold this subject?</p> <p>8. How is their notion disproved?</p> <p>9. In what sense is God the author of faith?</p> <p>10. Name some of the principal texts relied on in favor of the Antinomian view.</p> <p>11. How are they explained?</p> | <p>12. Are there degrees in faith?</p> <p>13. How is this proved?</p> <p>14. Through what channel is faith derived?</p> <p>15. How is this proved?</p> <p>16. Upon what ground or foundation is faith based?</p> <p>17. How is this proved from Scripture?</p> <p>18. How have theologians divided faith?</p> <p>19. What are the two leading views in reference to the nature of justifying faith?</p> <p>20. By whom has the <i>first</i> been adopted?</p> <p>21. Who have adopted the <i>second</i>?</p> <p>22. How can it be proved that saving faith implies more than mental assent?</p> <p>23. What serious difficulties encumber the opposite theory?</p> |
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LECTURE XXIII.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE inquiry upon which we are now about to enter is of the deepest interest to all mankind. How may a fallen sinner recover from the miseries of his lapsed state? This was substantially the question propounded with so much feeling by the convicted jailer to the imprisoned apostles: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And from the earliest ages there may be seen, in the history of all nations, evidences of the general concern of the wisest and most serious of mankind for a satisfactory knowledge of a certain and adequate remedy for the evils of the present state. The best informed among the heathen have generally exhibited some correct notions in reference to the connection between natural and moral evil. In their zealous pursuit of some mode of escape from the miseries and calamities "that flesh is heir to," they have generally adopted the principle, that natural evil is the effect of moral evil. Hence, their systems of philosophy and morals, their rigorous discipline and painful austerities, adopted and pursued with the vain hope that by these means they could eradicate from the soul the principle of evil, destroy the dominion of vice, and, by a restoration of the disordered moral faculties of man, prepare him for the enjoyment of pure and uninterrupted felicity. But every effort of human reason and philosophy to discover a mode of deliverance from the thralldom of sin, however flattering it may have appeared for a season, has terminated in disappointment or despair.

The light of nature may exhibit in its huge deformity the disease of sin; but an adequate remedy it has never been able to descry. It can lead man to the contemplation of what he is; it can show him his sinful and miserable condition, and teach him to sigh over his misfortunes; but it can never unfold the scheme of redemption, and teach him to smile at the prospect of a blissful immortality. To supply this grand desideratum, revelation comes to our aid. God alone was able to devise, and he has condescended to make known the plan by which "He can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In the present lecture, we propose a consideration of the Bible doctrine of JUSTIFICATION.

In discussing this subject, there are two leading inquiries naturally

presenting themselves to view. First, what is implied in justification? Secondly, how may it be obtained? We will consider these questions in their order.

I. *We inquire, what does justification imply?* The Greek word rendered justification in the New Testament, is *δικαιωσις*, which means *a judicial decision, or sentence of acquittal*. The verb is *δικαζω*, which means *to judge, to render sentence, pronounce just, &c.* According to the etymology of the word, *to justify*, in the Bible acceptance, is *to acquit by a judicial sentence or decision*.

The term is evidently forensic, having reference to law and judicial proceedings. There are, however, several different senses in which it may be taken. Referring to justification in a forensic sense, we would observe, that it may take place in three different ways.

1. An individual may be arraigned at the bar of justice to answer to a specific accusation; but, upon the examination of the testimony, it may appear that he has not been guilty of the thing alleged against him: here he is justified by the force of testimony, and a correct administration will announce the decision accordingly.

2. After the arraignment of an individual before the bar of justice, to answer to a certain accusation, it may appear, in the investigation of the case, that, although the special charge alleged against him may be established by the evidence, it nevertheless is not contrary to the law: here he is justified by the force of law, and a correct administration will pronounce the sentence accordingly.

3. An individual may be arraigned at the bar of justice, tried and condemned for a crime; yet the executive power of the government may remit the penalty: here he is justified on the principle of pardon.

According to any of these three plans, a person may be justified in a civil sense. But in the scriptural acceptance of the subject, agreeably to what has already been established in reference to the fallen and guilty condition of all mankind, it is impossible that any can be justified on either the first or second hypothesis; for all men stand justly charged with, and condemned for, the violation of God's holy law. "All are concluded under sin;" and the Bible declares, that "all have sinned;" and that "all the world are guilty before God." Therefore, if justification ever be obtained by any, it must be *on the ground of PARDON*. Here is the only door of hope to a guilty world.

But we must inquire more particularly concerning the nature of that justification, on the ground of pardon, which the Scriptures develop. "Justification, in common language, signifies a vindication from any charge which affects the moral character; but in theology it is used for the acceptance of one, by God, who is, and confesses himself to be,

guilty. ‘To justify a sinner,’ says Mr. Bunting, in an able sermon on this important subject, ‘is to account and consider him relatively righteous; and to deal with him as such, notwithstanding his past unrighteousness, by clearing, absolving, discharging, and releasing him from various penal evils, and especially from the wrath of God, and the liability to eternal death, which by that past unrighteousness he had deserved; and by accepting him as if just, and admitting him to the state, the privileges, and the rewards of righteousness. Hence, it appears that justification, and the remission or forgiveness of sin, are substantially the same thing.’—(Watson’s Bib. Dic.)

We would here insert the definition of justification as given in the 9th article of religion in the discipline of the Methodist E. Church. “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings;—wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”

With the above general definition of justification before us, we now proceed to a more minute examination of its most important particulars.

1. We would show from the Scriptures that *justification means pardon, or the remission of sin*. This will appear from the following Scriptures:—Acts xiii. 38, 39. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*; and by him all that believe are *justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Rom. iii. 25, 26. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness *for the remission of sins* that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and *the justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom. iv. 5, 8. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that *justifieth the ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose *iniquities are forgiven*, and whose *sins are covered*; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” In these quotations, “justification,” “the forgiveness of sins,” “the remission of sins,” and the “non-imputation of sin,” are all used as convertible terms;—exegetical of each other; hence, in Scripture language, they are synonymous. This leading position here established, will be found to extend throughout the New Testament, wherever the subject of justification is presented; and bearing it in mind, will tend greatly to facilitate the investigation.

2. We proceed to remark, *that justification is not an abrogation of law, by the exercise of prerogative*.

The covenant of redemption given to man after the fall, though different from, is not contradictory to, the covenant of works, under which he was primarily placed. The language of the covenant of works was, "Do this and live;"—its condition was, perfect and perpetual obedience. The language of the covenant of redemption is, "Believe, and be saved;" its condition is, "Faith which worketh by love." The propounding of the covenant of redemption does not imply the abrogation of the law of God as originally delivered to man; but only a suspension of its rigor, in perfect consistency with the honor of God, so as to admit a substitute instead of the actual culprits. But the fact that a substitute was at all required, is sufficient evidence that the law is not abrogated, but rather established;—it is "magnified, and made honorable." Although the law be suspended in relation to the full and immediate execution of the penalty denounced against man, yet it is not suspended in reference to Christ. He met the claims of justice, and made satisfaction. Therefore it is clear that justification implies no abrogation of law. It is not an arbitrary process, by which the guilty are pardoned and released at the expense of justice; but a wise and gracious arrangement, by which "God can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

3. *Justification is personal in its character.* It is a sentence of acquittal, having respect to particular individuals; and in this respect is distinct from the general arrangement of mercy, by which all mankind are so far redeemed from the curse of the broken law as to be graciously placed under the covenant of redemption, so as to have the offer of eternal life, according to gospel terms. The placing of all men in a salvable state, under the covenant of grace, is a merciful legislative arrangement of God, in which a general promise is made and a general condition required. Justification is a judicial decision of God, under that gracious legislation in reference to particular individuals, in view of the prescribed conditions having been complied with. "Justification presupposeth a particular person, a particular cause, a condition performed, and the performance, as already past, pleaded; and the decision proceeds accordingly."

4. *Justification is a work really performed;—a sentence or decision that actually is passed upon individuals.* The Antinomian notion, therefore, of "eternal justification," is manifestly absurd. If it be a decision or sentence at all, it must take place in time. A mere purpose in the mind of a judge, is no sentence. "A sentence is pronounced; and a sentence pronounced and declared from eternity, before man was created, when no sin had been committed, no law published, no Saviour promised, no faith exercised, when, in a word, no being existed but God himself, is not only absurd, but impossible; for it would have been a decision

declared to none, and therefore not declared at all; and if, as they say, 'the sentence was passed in eternity, but manifested in time,' it might from thence be as rightly argued that the world was created from eternity, and that the work of creation in the beginning of time was only a manifestation of that which was from everlasting. It is the guilty who are pardoned;—'He justifieth the ungodly;' guilt, therefore, precedes pardon; while that remains, so far are any from being justified, that they are 'under wrath,' in a state of 'condemnation,' with which a state of justification cannot consist; for the contradiction is palpable; so that the advocates of this wild notion must either give up justification in eternity, or a state of condemnation in time. If they hold the former, they contradict common sense; if they deny the latter, they deny the Scriptures."—(Watson's Institutes.)

5. Justification being *the pardon of sin, it is not a work by which we are made actually just or righteous*. Justification changes our relation to law;—it removes condemnation, but does not change our nature, or make us holy. "This is sanctification, (or in its incipient state regeneration,) which is, indeed, the immediate fruit of justification; but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies what God does for us through his Son; the other, what God works in us by his Spirit. So that, although some rare instances may be found wherein the terms justified and justification are used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also, yet in general use they are sufficiently distinguished from each other both by St. Paul and the other inspired writers."—(Wesley's Sermons.)

Keeping in view the definition given,—that justification means the pardon of sin,—it will be easy to distinguish between this blessing and regeneration, which is properly sanctification begun. The one removes the guilt of past sin by pardon, the other "creates us anew in Christ Jesus," that we "may go in peace, and sin no more." But we are not to understand, from the fact of our pardon, that God views our past sins in a more favorable light than he did previously to our justification. Pardon cannot change their real nature. Still they are sins; and as such, are an abomination to the Lord. Nor can his immaculate nature view them in any other than their true character. The crime of a culprit is none the less from the fact that he has been pardoned. Pardon releases from punishment, but does not change either the character of the crime or of the criminal. A pardoned sinner is still viewed as having sinned, though saved by grace. His sins, considered in themselves, still deserve the wrath of God; but for Christ's sake that punishment is remitted. Hence, when we use the word *acquittal*, in connection with justification, we understand thereby, *merely release or exemption from*

punishment, without changing in the least the nature of past sin, or the light in which it is contemplated, in the abstract, by the Divine mind. By no fiction of law can we suppose that God ever looks upon sin as not being sin, or the sinner as never having sinned, because pardon has been vouchsafed. Indeed, the very nature of pardon requires that there be something rendering that pardon necessary. Were it otherwise, we might suppose the pardon to be forfeited by the sinner with impunity; for if the nature of his sins and his own character have been so changed that God can no longer view the sinner as having sinned, or his sins as being offensive in their nature, the sinner can derive no benefit from the pardon, nor could it be possible, under this view, for such a thing as pardon to exist.

II. Having thus far discussed the nature of justification, we now proceed to consider the *method by which it is to be obtained*. Among those who profess to be guided by the Scriptures, there are several different methods or plans by which this blessing is said to be obtained.

1. Justification is said to be by the imputation of Christ's active righteousness or obedience.

2. It is said to be by the imputation of Christ's active and passive righteousness or obedience, taken together.

3. It is said to be by works alone.

4. It is said to be by faith and works united, or taken together.

5. It is said to be by faith alone.

The last scheme is the one we believe to be taught in the Scriptures; but we will examine each of them in the order just stated.

1. *Justification is said to be by the imputation of Christ's active righteousness or obedience.*

This scheme has been advocated by high Calvinists, and lies at the foundation of Antinomianism. By it we are taught that Christ's personal obedience to the moral law of God is so imputed to the sinner as to be accounted his own, and that he is thereby justified in view of his having kept the moral law in Christ. Those who advocate this theory do not reject faith as being altogether unnecessary under the gospel; they hold that it flows from a justified state, as an effect from a cause, and is the manifestation or evidence of justification. But they reject faith, and everything else, as having anything to do in justification, except the personal and active obedience of Christ to the moral law, imputed to the sinner as though he himself had thus obeyed. That this scheme is unscriptural and absurd, must be clearly obvious to such as will carefully weigh the following considerations.

(1.) *It is perfectly gratuitous, there being not a single text in the Bible to which we can appeal as having announced any such doctrine. It is*

true that it is said, in reference to Messiah, Jer. xxiii. 6, "And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." And St. Paul, in 1 Cor. i. 30, says that Christ "of God is made unto us wisdom and *righteousness*, and sanctification and redemption." In reference to these passages we remark: 1. There is no evidence that Christ's personal righteousness is here referred to at all;—it is rather "his obedience unto *death*, even *the death of the cross*." 2. It is neither here asserted that Christ's righteousness shall be ours, nor that it shall be imputed to us. Only it is said, "The name by which he shall be called is, The Lord our Righteousness;" and, "He shall be made unto us righteousness," &c. The plain meaning is, that he is the source or fountain from which our righteousness or justification is derived. But this is vastly different from saying that his keeping the moral law is imputed to us, or to be acknowledged instead of our having kept it. Christ is said to be "the resurrection," "our life," "our peace," &c. But, surely, we must not hence infer that his rising from the dead, his living, and his possession of peace, are to be imputed to us as though we had done these things in him, and had no right to any further resurrection, life, or peace! And yet the argument is precisely the same in this and the former case. Indeed, the entire notion that Christ was our representative in such close sense that what he did or suffered we did or suffered in him, is flatly contradictory to the whole tenor of Scripture on the subject. It is nowhere said that we obeyed or suffered in Christ; but the language is, "He suffered for us." The Scripture doctrine is, not that we obeyed in Christ, but that, through "his obedience unto death," our disobedience is forgiven.

(2.) *This scheme involves a fiction and impossibility, nowhere countenanced in Scripture, and irreconcilable with the Divine attributes.*

An all-wise and holy God must view things as they really are. He never can consider one person as having performed an act, and at the same time as not having performed it. For the all-wise and Holy One to consider anything as being what it is not, or to consider any person as having done what he never did, is perfectly impossible and clearly absurd. I know it has been argued that there is no more absurdity implied in the active righteousness of Christ being imputed to us, than there is in our sins being imputed to him. But, we ask, in what sense are our sins imputed to Christ? Surely not in reference to the formality of fact. Some have even gone so far on this subject as almost to assume the attitude of blasphemy. It has been even said that "Christ was the greatest sinner that ever lived." This they drew as a necessary conclusion from the principle which they had assumed;—that all the sins of the whole world were so imputed to Christ, that, in the mind of God,

he was considered to have actually committed them. In reference to such as have thus reasoned, we would say, at least, that their logic is better than their divinity. For, according to the principle assumed, the conclusion, shocking as it certainly is, would be perfectly legitimate. But the position is an absurd and inconsistent fiction. The sins of the world were never imputed to Christ with the formality of the fact, so that the Almighty looked upon Christ as actually having committed them, or upon them as being formally and in fact his sins. They were only imputed to him in reference to their penalty. The sins were not made his, nor considered as such; but he endured the penalty due them; he suffered for them. Indeed, to suppose that they were made or considered his in the formality of the fact, would be to say that he suffered for his own sins, and not for the sins of others. It would overturn the vicarious nature of his death, and at the same time destroy the necessity of pardon. For if all the sins of the whole world were imputed to Christ as his sins, they cannot still be considered as the sins of the world; they, by this absurd fiction, have been passed over to Christ; and if so, they cannot still be considered as the sins of the world, as they were previously to the supposed imputation; and, consequently, there are no sins left upon the world to be pardoned; for certainly I cannot need pardon, nor can the law punish me, for that crime which it does not consider as mine. But this entire position is absurd and unscriptural to the very centre. The Almighty never could have considered the sins of the world so imputed to Christ as to be his; for we hear a "voice from the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom *I am well pleased.*" In no sense could he be considered a sinner; but "the iniquity of all was laid upon him;"—that is, the punishment which it deserved. Hence, it now appears, that, as the sins of the world were not imputed to Christ so as to be considered his, we cannot infer therefrom that the active and personal obedience of Christ is imputed to us so as to be considered ours in the proper sense, as though performed by us. As our sins were imputed to him in reference to the penalty, so his "obedience unto death" is imputed to us in reference to its benefits. This is the plain scriptural presentation of the subject. The Antinomian hypothesis, that God justifies the sinner by imputing to him the obedience of Christ to the moral law, and considering him as having thus obeyed in Christ, is only an idle dream, without reason or Scripture for its support, involving an absurd fiction, irreconcilable with the Divine character.

"The judgment of the all-wise God is always according to truth; neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so. He can no more confound me with Christ than with David or Abraham."
—(Wesley.)

Again ; “ If what our Lord was and did is to be accounted to us in the sense just given, then we must be accounted never to have sinned, because Christ never sinned, and yet we must ask for pardon, though we are accounted from birth to death to have fulfilled God’s law in Christ ; or if they should say that when we ask for pardon we ask only for a revelation to us of our eternal justification or pardon, the matter is not altered ; for what need is there of pardon, in time or eternity, if we are accounted to have perfectly obeyed God’s holy law ? and why should we be accounted also to have suffered in Christ the penalty of sins which we are accounted never to have committed ? ” — (Watson’s Institutes.)

Thus, it is clear that the different parts of this monstrous fiction fight with each other. If, by the above kind of imputation, we transfer Christ’s personal righteousness to us, his sufferings for us are useless, and pardon is not needed. If our sins are, as above, imputed to him, then he suffered not “ for our sins,” but for his own ; and the Bible becomes a book of silly dreams, or absurd and inconsistent fictions.

3. *This scheme of justification by the imputation of Christ’s personal obedience to the moral law is irreconcilable with the character of Christ’s personal acts, and could not furnish us a righteousness adapted to our condition.*

The supposition is, that all that Christ did in his proper person is to be set to our account, or imputed to us as ours, so as to weave out a robe of perfect obedience exactly suited to our case. If, upon a comparison of his personal acts of obedience, or his righteousness, with the description of righteousness, or the peculiar kind of moral obedience, required at our hands, it be found that the righteousness of Christ contains more than we need, the robe thus woven for us will be found to be more than our strength may be able to bear ; but, on the other hand, if, upon the comparison, it appear that the righteousness of Christ, or the obedience he rendered to the moral law, contains less than we need, the robe thus woven for us will not be sufficient to shelter our guilty heads from the sword of justice. Either a redundancy or a deficiency, or a redundancy in some respects and a deficiency in others, will evidence such an unsuitableness in this plan of justification as should cause us seriously to suspect that it is a plan of our own devising, and not the heaven-stamped method arranged by infinite wisdom for the justification of “ the ungodly.”

Now, in turning our attention to this subject, we think it will be readily perceived, that, while the righteousness of Christ, as above claimed by imputation, will be found to contain too much in some respects, in other respects it will contain too little to meet our exigencies.

The greatest portion of the personal acts of Christ were of a very

peculiar kind, such as never were, and never could be, appropriate to any being in the universe but himself. He appeared in our world in the peculiar character of God-man Mediator, and took upon himself the regalia of Prophet, Priest, and King, in a peculiar and exalted sense; and in the performance of the duties, and the exercise of the prerogatives, of his official character, he went forth "travelling in the greatness of his strength," to do the will of Him that had sent him, in the accomplishment of the stupendous work of the world's redemption, exhibiting in his sublime career a train of magnificent doings and God-like achievements, calculated at once to strike with awe and fill with amazement both heaven and earth. Will a mortal man indulge in aspirations so lofty, as to pretend that all these personal acts of the Saviour's active obedience are, in the Divine mind, considered as having been performed by us, that thereby we may be furnished with a robe of perfect obedience, and thus stand justified before God? Surely, actions like these, a righteousness of this peculiar and exalted kind, was never required at our hands; it contains vastly too much, and is far too exalted in its character, to be appropriate to our condition. "He then that assumeth this righteousness to himself," says Goodwin, "and appareleth himself with it, represents himself before God, not in the habit of a just or righteous man, but in the glorious attire of the great Mediator of the world, whose righteousness hath heights and depths in it, a length and breadth, which infinitely exceed the proportions of all men whatever. Now, then, for a silly worm to take this robe of immeasurable majesty upon him, and to conceit himself as great in holiness and righteousness as Jesus Christ, (for that is the spirit that rules in this opinion, to teach men to assume all that Christ did unto themselves, and that in no other way, nor upon any lower terms, than if themselves had personally done it,) whether this be right, I leave to sober men to consider."—(Treatise on Justification.)

As we have seen, the personal righteousness of Christ, in one sense, is too exalted, and contains vastly too much, to be adapted to our condition, so, in another sense, it contains too little. Infinitely perfect as the moral and personal obedience of Christ was, as pertaining to his own immaculate character, yet, if we attempt to substitute it for that obedience to moral law which duty enjoins upon us, we would perceive it, in a variety of particulars, not suited to our case. There are many circumstances and relations in life which never pertained to the Saviour, requiring the performance of peculiar moral obligations. These obligations which rest upon us, and in the neglect of which the law will hold us guilty, the Saviour never performed. Of this class, we might mention parental and conjugal obligations, the reciprocal obligations between

master and servant, and magisterial and official duties of various kinds. Here, we find not only an endless variety of items under a particular class, but entire classes of duties, which the Saviour was never in a situation to perform. Can he who is deficient in his righteousness in any of these particulars, plead the perfect obedience of Christ? Can the parent or the master who is delinquent in reference to the peculiar duties of that relation, refer to the moral obedience of Christ, and find, in the history of his life, the discharge of the specific obligation with the neglect of which he stands charged? Surely not.

We know it may be urged, that, although the personal righteousness of Christ be wanting in reference to many particulars pertaining to us, yet it was perfect as a whole; there was no defect in it so far as his own moral character was concerned; and this obedience, which was perfect in the aggregate, may be imputed in the aggregate to us. In reply to this, we would say, that the strictness of law can admit no such fulfilment in the aggregate. The legal requirements are specific; and the sentence against the delinquent is equally particular and minute. In righteousness based upon pardon in view of satisfaction rendered, there may be admitted as satisfaction something equivalent to, though in some respects different from, what the law required; but where righteousness is claimed upon the ground of actual fulfilment of law, to plead the equivalency of one action, or of one course of duties, to another, is perfectly inadmissible. The law can admit no such commutation; but must exact perfect conformity to every jot and tittle of its precepts; and he that "offends in one is guilty of all."

Thus it appears that justification cannot be based on the personal righteousness of Christ imputed to us as our own; because, in some respects it contains too much, and in other respects too little, to be appropriate to our peculiar exigencies.

4. *Next, we would observe, that this scheme of justification is objectionable, because it bases the whole matter upon actual obedience to the moral law, instead of placing it on the ground of pardon, in view of the meritorious death of Christ, as the Scriptures expressly teach.*

That the scheme of justification in question is fatally defective, for the reason just stated, will be obvious, when we reflect that there is no Bible truth more prominently and explicitly recognized than this:—that our salvation is to be attributed to the Saviour's "obedience unto death." Now, if we ground our justification on Christ's personal obedience to the moral law, it will be, not a comment on the plan of salvation as clearly revealed in the Bible, but an invention of our own. Is it not to be regretted, if men must invent divinity, that they do not, at least, invent something less inconsistent and absurd in itself? The Scriptures

nowhere attribute our justification to the moral purity of the Saviour's life. This personal obedience to moral precept was essential that he might present an example for our imitation; and also for the perfection of his own character, that he might be prepared to offer on the cross, for the sins of the world, a sacrifice "without blemish and without spot." But it is no more to be considered as the direct ground of our justification than the obedience of Abraham or of Paul.

Indeed, this scheme proposes for man righteousness of a kind which it is utterly impossible for him ever to possess. Legal righteousness, or justification in view of law, must be one of two kinds:—that is, it must either be based upon perfect obedience, or satisfaction. When once the law is broken, perfect obedience is out of the question. There is, then, no possible chance for justification in the sight of law, but by satisfaction. It will be like "placing new cloth in an old garment;" the breach must first be healed by satisfaction. After the first covenant had been broken, the law no longer demanded perfect obedience; that had been forever set aside by transgression: the demand then was for the execution of the penalty, or satisfaction for the breach. Christ satisfied for the breach, not by keeping the moral precepts, but by "giving his life a ransom for many."

There is a two-fold righteousness or justification; *primary* and *ultimate*. The former consisteth in perfect obedience to law. The latter in satisfaction for the breach of law. Justification in the former sense rests on the fact that we cannot be charged with having violated the command. Justification in the latter sense rests upon the fact that, though the law has been broken, satisfaction has been rendered. None can be justified by the same law, and in reference to the same actions, in both these senses, at the same time; for when the law has been kept, satisfaction can have no room. Now the justification presented in the gospel must be of one or the other of these kinds. If we are justified by perfect obedience, then we can admit no breach of law, and of course can neither plead satisfaction nor ask for pardon. If we plead satisfaction rendered, or ask for pardon, we thereby confess our guilt, and renounce justification on the ground of perfect obedience.

Again; justification cannot be by the personal obedience of Christ; for the law did not demand the obedience of another for us, but our own obedience: but even if we could admit that we had perfectly kept the law in Christ, yet we could not then be justified on the ground of perfect obedience; for still we have sinned in ourselves, and for this the law would still have its demands upon us.

On the subject in hand, we quote the following from an acute writer: "If our sins have been expiated by the obedience of the life of Christ,

either a perfect expiation has been thus made for all of them, or an imperfect one for some of them. The first cannot be asserted, for then it would follow that Christ had died in vain; for, as he died to expiate our sins, he would not have accounted it necessary to offer such an expiation for them, if they had been already expiated by the obedience of his life. And the latter cannot be maintained, because Christ has yielded perfect obedience to the law of God: wherefore, if he have performed that for the expiation of our sins, he must necessarily, through that obedience, have expiated all of them perfectly.”—(Piscator.)

But hear the language of St. Paul on this subject. Gal. ii. 21. “If righteousness be by the law, then *Christ died in vain*.” This whole scheme of justification by the active obedience of Christ drives necessarily to the dreadful consequence here presented by the apostle. It allows no adequate reason whatever for the death of Christ. The apostle argues that justification by the law renders nugatory the death of Christ. And what, we ask, is this scheme of the imputed active obedience of Christ, but justification by law? Even if we admit that the moral law kept by the Saviour was different from that law spoken of by the apostle when he discards justification by the law, the argument will only be the stronger for that admission; for if justification by the Mosaic law renders the death of Christ unnecessary, how much more must justification by that superior law which the Saviour kept render the death of Christ unnecessary? The argument is plain and simple; if we are perfectly justified in the active moral obedience of Christ, we can need no more.

Again; this scheme confounds the two covenants, and makes the covenant of grace, in every particular, the same as the covenant of works; or, in other words, it denies that there is such a thing as the covenant of grace, and puts man under the same law, and requires the same mode of justification, before the fall and under the gospel.

From the arguments which we have briefly sketched, we think it clear that a fallen sinner can never be justified by the imputation of Christ's active obedience. This Antinomian scheme must be renounced as unscriptural and absurd; and we must look to some other quarter for that acquittal in the sight of God, from our sin and guilt, which alone can fit us for the enjoyment of happiness. The various other methods of justification already named, we must reserve for a future lecture. On a subject of so much importance, we should endeavor to investigate with diligence and care, at the same time relying upon the teachings of Scripture, and invoking the illuminations of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXIII.

- QUESTION I. Have the nations of the earth generally manifested any concern in reference to their deliverance from sin and the miseries of life?
2. How does this appear?
 3. What has been the success of their schemes?
 4. What grand desideratum does revelation supply?
 5. Give the etymology of justification.
 6. In what three different ways may a man be justified in a civil sense?
 7. Why can no one, in a Scripture sense, be justified on either the first or second plan?
 8. What does justification mean, as defined by Watson?
 9. What is the definition given in the Methodist Discipline?
 10. What is implied in justification, according to the Scriptures?
 11. How is this shown?
 12. How is it shown that justification does not imply the abrogation of law?
 13. How does it appear that justification is *personal*?
 14. How does it appear that justification is a sentence actually passed?
 15. How does this consist with the notion of *eternal justification*?
 16. Does justification make us *actually* righteous?
 17. How is it distinguished from regeneration and sanctification?
 18. What five different plans of justification have been presented?
 19. Which contains the truth?
 20. What is the first argument against justification by the imputation of Christ's active obedience?
 21. What is the second?
 22. How is the argument illustrated?
 23. What is the third?
 24. How is it illustrated?
 25. What is the fourth, and how is it illustrated?
 26. How does it appear that this scheme confounds the two covenants?
 27. Who have been the advocates of this scheme?
 28. Have they rejected faith altogether?
 29. What two kinds of righteousness are described?
 30. How does it appear that they cannot consist together?
 31. How does it appear that no man can be justified by the former?

LECTURE XXIV.

JUSTIFICATION.

IN the preceding lecture we proceeded so far in the investigation of the different methods of justification which have been advocated, as to examine, and, as we believe, show the absurdity of, the scheme which teaches justification by the imputation of the active obedience of Christ.

II. The next method to be examined is, *that which proposes justification by the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience, taken together.*

This is the scheme maintained by Calvin himself; and the great body of those since designated as Calvinists, have, in this particular, followed in his footsteps. That class of Calvinists, however, distinguished as high Calvinists, as well as those called Antinomians, have contended strenuously for the scheme of justification by the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness, which we have already considered. The scheme of Calvin, which we propose now to examine, differs from the Antinomian plan, as set forth in the preceding lecture, in but one particular; — that is, it blends the passive with the active righteousness of Christ, making no distinction between them whatever; and presents this personal obedience of Christ, both active and passive, as being imputed to the sinner in such sense as to be considered his, so as thus to constitute him righteous in Christ.

Some able Arminian divines, such as Wesley, and even Arminius himself, although they disliked the terms used by Calvinists of that class who have advocated this scheme, yet, for the sake of peace, have been willing to allow that the phrase "imputed righteousness of Christ" might be used in such sense as to be admissible. But when they have proceeded to qualify and explain the sense in which they could use the phrase, it appears that there has still been so important a distinction between their understanding of the subject and that of Calvinists, that the latter could not be willing to adopt the limitations and qualifications of the former.

That we may have a clear view of the real point of difference between them on this subject, we will first present the sentiment of Calvin in his own words, as collected from the third book of his Institutes :

— “We simply explain justification to be an acceptance by which God receives us into his favor and esteems us as righteous persons ; and we say it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.” “He must certainly be destitute of a righteousness of his own who is taught to seek it out of himself. This is most clearly asserted by the apostle when he says, ‘He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ We see that our righteousness is not in ourselves, but in Christ. ‘As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.’ What is placing our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but asserting that we are accounted righteous only because his obedience is accepted for us as if it were our own?”

From these words of Calvin, it will be seen that he holds to imputation in the strict and proper sense ; in such sense that the righteousness of Christ is considered formally our own. The only difference to be seen between this and the scheme already refuted is, that Calvin makes no distinction between the active and passive righteousness of Christ.

We will now present a few quotations from leading Arminians on this subject, that we may see wherein they differ from Calvin. In Mr. Wesley’s sermon on “The Lord our Righteousness,” he uses these words : — “But when is this righteousness imputed ? When they believe. In that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes. But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers ? In this : all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be, done by them, but wholly for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. But perhaps some will affirm that faith is imputed to us for righteousness. St. Paul affirms this ; therefore I affirm it too. Faith is imputed for righteousness to every believer, namely, faith in the righteousness of Christ ; but this is exactly the same thing which has been said before ; for by that expression I mean neither more nor less than that we are justified by faith, not by works, or that every believer is forgiven and accepted merely for the sake of what Christ had done and suffered.”

In reference to this sermon, Mr. Watson very justly remarks, that it “is one of peace ; one in which he shows how near he was willing to approach those who held the doctrine of Calvin on this subject ;” yet we think the point of difference is quite palpable. Calvin teaches imputation in a strict and proper sense ; so that the obedience of Christ is

accepted for us as if it were our own ;” whereas, Wesley teaches imputation in an accommodated sense. He holds that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us in its effects,—that is, in its merits ; we are justified by faith in the merits of Christ ; or, in other words, we are justified, “ forgiven and accepted, for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us.” It amounts to no more than this :—that the meritorious sacrifice of Christ is the ground upon which God pardons the sinner when he believes.

The sense in which Arminians view this subject is very clearly expressed by Goodwin thus :—“ If we take the phrase of imputing Christ’s righteousness improperly, viz., for the bestowing, as it were, of the righteousness of Christ, including his obedience, as well passive as active, in the return of it ; that is, in the privileges, blessings, and benefits purchased by it, so a believer may be said to be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed. But then the meaning can be no more than this : God justifies a believer for the sake of Christ’s righteousness, and not for any righteousness of his own. Such an imputation of the righteousness of Christ as this, is no way denied or questioned.”—(On Justification.)

“ Between these opinions as to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, (as Mr. Watson observes,) it will be seen that there is a manifest difference, which difference arises from the different senses in which the term imputation is taken. The latter takes it in the sense of accounting or allowing to the believer the benefit of the righteousness of Christ, the other in the sense of reckoning or accounting the righteousness of Christ as ours ; that is, what he did and suffered is regarded as done and suffered by us.”

As we think the Calvinistic notion on this subject is now sufficiently clear and distinct from the Arminian view, we will endeavor briefly to examine its claims in the light of Scripture and reason. It will be found, on close examination, that most of the arguments presented in opposition to the first notion of imputation, are, with a little variation, equally applicable to this scheme.

1. *This notion of imputation, by the way in which it blends the active and passive righteousness of Christ, appears either to confound the two in a manner inconsistent with the Scripture account of the subject, or to present us with a righteousness not adapted to our condition.*

We know it has been admitted by the best Arminian writers, that the active and the passive righteousness of Christ are not separated in Scripture, and that they ought not to be separated by us. All this we concede ; yet there is certainly a difference between blending or uniting them so as still to preserve the real and distinct nature of each, and so

blending or uniting them as utterly to confound them, and destroy all distinction in their nature. The former sense Arminians admit; the latter sense the Calvinistic scheme implies. As this scheme teaches that we are justified by the imputation of Christ's active and passive righteousness to us as our own, it must imply, either, 1. That we are hereby furnished with an active and a passive justification; that is, that Christ both kept the moral law and suffered for us, in place of our keeping it and suffering the penalty for having broken it; or, 2. It must imply that Christ's active and his passive righteousness are taken as a whole, and constitute, in the same undivided sense, that satisfaction to justice by the imputation of which we are pardoned or justified. If the former be the meaning, it presents us with a righteousness not adapted to our condition; if the latter be the construction, the active and the passive righteousness of Christ are confounded in a manner inconsistent with the Scripture account of the subject. In reference to the former interpretation we would remark, that to say that Christ kept the moral law in place of our keeping it, and also suffered in our place the penalty for having violated it, implies that we were required perfectly to keep the law, and then to suffer the penalty for its violation also, which is absurd. We could not be required to do both. So far from the law requiring perfect obedience and suffering both, it could only inflict suffering in our default of perfect obedience. Therefore, as we could not need a righteousness embracing both these branches, it follows that if Christ wrought out for us a righteousness of this twofold character, it was not adapted to our condition. Again; admitting that we could need a righteousness of this kind, the moral acts of Christ, as we saw in the examination of the former theory of imputation, in some respects contain too much, and in other respects too little, to suit our exigencies.

In reference to the latter interpretation we would remark, that to suppose that the active and the passive righteousness of Christ are to be taken together as a whole, constituting, in the same undivided sense, that satisfaction to justice by the imputation of which to us as our own we are pardoned, would so confound the moral and personal acts of Christ with his sufferings, as to make no distinction between them; which is contrary to Scripture. For, although it be true that the active and the passive righteousness of Christ are both united, and both essential to constitute a satisfaction, in view of which we may be pardoned, yet they are not essential in precisely the same sense. The sufferings of Christ were *directly* essential, as satisfying the claims of justice by enduring what was accepted instead of the specific penalty denounced; the active obedience of Christ was *indirectly* essential, as giving perfec-

tion and dignity to the character suffering, that thereby his sufferings might have power to satisfy. Hence, properly speaking, the moral obedience of Christ was only essential in making satisfaction to justice, as it was necessary that the character suffering should be possessed of every perfection, in order to render his sufferings available. The Divinity of Christ was just as essential, and essential in the same sense, in rendering an adequate satisfaction to law and justice, as his active obedience; but will any one say that the Divine nature of our blessed Lord was imputed to us as our own, or that God accounted us as actually possessing the infinite attributes of the Godhead? And yet, it is quite clear that the Divinity and moral obedience of Christ sustain the same relation to his atonement. They give dignity and value to that "obedience unto death" which satisfied for sin; but they constituted no part of the penal infliction of justice. In the Scriptures, Christ is said to have suffered "for us;" that is, in our stead: but he is nowhere said to have possessed proper Divinity, or to have obeyed the moral law "for us," or in our stead. The truth is, he possessed Divinity, and obeyed the moral law, for himself; this was essential to his character as Mediator: but he suffered "for us;" and to say that the moral obedience of Christ is to be imputed to us as our own, and that it, in the same sense with his sufferings, constitutes that satisfaction to justice in view of which we are pardoned, is a confounding of the active and the passive obedience of Christ, implied in the Calvinistic scheme, which the Scriptures do not sanction.

2. *This scheme of imputation implies the same absurd fiction embraced in the former one; that is, that the all-wise and infinite Being should consider the acts and sufferings of another as formally and de facto our own.* All that was said on this subject in reference to the Antinomian scheme, applies with equal force against the theory of Calvin; hence, we add no more here upon that point.

3. *Lastly, we remark that this, as well as the former scheme, is perfectly gratuitous; there being no Scripture which by any fair interpretation affords it the least countenance.* Although we have admitted that the phrase "imputed righteousness of Christ" might, with proper explanations, be used in a good sense, yet it may be worth while here plainly to assert that there is in Scripture no authority either for the expression or for the Calvinistic interpretation on the subject; and therefore it were better that both be discarded. In those Scriptures mainly relied upon as teaching the Calvinistic notion of imputation, such terms are used as "impute," or "imputed," "the righteousness of God," "clothed with garments of salvation," "robes of righteousness," "white linen, the righteousness of the saints," "putting on Christ,"

&c. But in every case a fair exegesis of the text, in consistency with the context, will clearly show that nothing like the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us as our own for justification is taught.

And (1.) We remark, in reference to impute and imputation, that these terms are never used as implying the imputation of something possessed by, or done by, one person to another as his own. But, on the contrary, these words are always spoken in reference to something possessed or performed by the person to whom the imputation is made. Thus it is said, "Abraham believed God, and it (the faith of Abraham) was *imputed* to him for righteousness." Again; "But to him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is *imputed* to him for righteousness." That is, his own faith, and not the faith of another man.

(2.) "When a thing is said simply to be imputed, as sin, folly, and so, righteousness, the phrase is not to be taken concerning the bare acts of the things, as if (for example) to impute sin to a man signified this, to repute the man (to whom sin is imputed) to have committed a sinful act, or as if to impute folly were simply to charge a man to have done foolishly; but when it is applied to things that are evil, and attributed to persons that have power over those to whom the imputation is made, it signifieth the charging the guilt of what is imputed upon the head of the person to whom the imputation is made, with an intent of inflicting some condign punishment upon him. So that to impute sin (in Scripture phrase) is to charge the guilt of sin upon a man with a purpose to punish him for it." — (Goodwin on Justification.)

Thus, when Shimei (2 Sam. xix. 19) prayeth David not to impute wickedness unto him, he means merely to ask exemption from the punishment which his wickedness deserved; and when the apostle says, "Sin is not imputed where there is no law," he does not mean that sin is not sin wherever it may exist, for that would be a contradiction in terms; but merely that sin is not so imputed as that punishment is inflicted on the sinner.

(3.) In those passages which refer to "the righteousness of God," &c., as connected with justification, the allusion is not to the active and passive righteousness of Christ, but to God's method of justifying sinners under the gospel; this is evident from these words: Rom. x. 3, 4. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness *to every one that believeth*." And Rom. iii. 21, 22. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for

there is no difference." Here it is undeniable that "the righteousness of God" spoken of is God's method of justifying sinners under the gospel by faith in Christ.

(4.) In those Scriptures referring to "robes of righteousness," "putting on Christ," &c., it is very evident from the context, that they relate either to temporal blessings, habitual holiness, or to the future rewards of the saints; and in no case is there the least evidence that they refer to the obedience of Christ imputed to the saints as their own.

There are other passages that might be named as having been quoted by Calvinists to sustain their favorite dogma of imputation; but we have presented what appear to be the most pointed, except it be one more which, as being a peculiarly favorite text with them on this point, we have reserved to the last. It is Rom. v. 19. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Here it has been argued that the obedience of Christ is imputed to believers in the same sense as the disobedience of Adam is imputed to his posterity; and assuming that Adam's sin is so imputed to his posterity as to be considered formally their own, Calvinists have rallied around this passage as a triumphant proof of their notion of imputation. To this, we shall reply in the language of the learned Goodwin.

"To come home to the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, I answer, first, that either to say that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to his posterity, (of believers,) or the sin of Adam to his, are both expressions at least unknown to the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures. There is neither word, nor syllable, nor letter, nor tittle, of any such thing to be found there. But that the faith of him that believeth is imputed for *righteousness*, are words which the Holy Ghost useth. But, secondly, because I would make no exception against words, further than necessity enforceth, I grant there are expressions in Scripture concerning both the communication of Adam's sin with his posterity, and the righteousness of Christ with those that believe, that will fairly enough bear the term imputation, if it be rightly understood, and according to the use of it in Scripture upon other occasions. But as it is commonly taken and understood by many, it occasions much error and mistake. Concerning Adam's sin or disobedience, many are said to be 'made sinners by it,' and so 'by the obedience of Christ,' it is said (in the same place) 'that many shall be made righteous;' but if men will exchange language with the Holy Ghost, they must see that they make him no loser. If, when they say 'Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation,' their meaning be the same with the Holy Ghost, when he saith, 'that by the obedience of one many were made sinners,' there is

no harm done; but it is evident, by what many speak, that the Holy Ghost and they are not of one mind touching the imputation or communication of Adam's sin with his posterity, but that they differ as much in meaning as in words. If, when they say 'Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation,' their meaning be this, that the guilt of Adam's sin is charged upon his whole posterity, or that the punishment of Adam's sin redounded from his person to his whole posterity, a main part of which punishment lieth in that original defilement wherein they are all conceived and born, and whereby they are truly made sinners before God; if this be the meaning of the term imputation when applied to Adam's sin, let it pass. But if the meaning be that that sinful act wherein Adam transgressed when he ate the forbidden fruit is in the letter and formality of it imputed to his posterity, so that by this imputation all his posterity are made formally sinners; this is an imputation which the Scriptures will never justify."—(Treatise on Justification.)

So, in the same manner, the righteousness or obedience of Christ is imputed to us, not by considering it ours in the letter and formality thereof, but by admitting us to share in its merits, blessings, and privileges. From what has been said, we think it will appear evident that the Calvinistic scheme of justification by the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience to us as our own, must be abandoned as inconsistent with the Scriptures. And as we have seen that neither the doctrine nor the phraseology employed is sanctioned by the Bible; and as the latter is so liable to abuse, sliding so easily into all the absurdities of Antinomianism, it deserves to be at once and forever abandoned.

III. *The third method of justification which we proposed to examine is that which teaches that it is by works alone.*

Justification by works alone may be understood in several different senses.

1. It may mean justification by perfect obedience to the original law of God. This, as we have already shown, is absolutely impossible to a fallen sinner. The condition of the first covenant being "Do this," (in your own person,) "and live," and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," it will hence follow, that, as the apostle declares that "all have sinned," and "all the world are guilty before God," to be justified by works of perfect obedience to the first covenant or original law of God, is absolutely impossible.

2. Justification by works alone may mean a perfect conformity to that moral code or law given to the Jews in their own Scriptures, and to the Gentiles by the influence of the Holy Spirit given unto them, to "show the work of the law written in their hearts." This is substan-

tially the same law that was given to Adam, and in reference to its subject matter, is identical with the covenant of works, which is still in force, not as a principle of justification, but as a rule of life, by which to estimate the moral standing of man, and exhibit the magnitude of his delinquencies in the sight of God; for, as the apostle says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." In reference to this law, it was that the Jews, in St. Paul's day, set up a claim to justification by works. The great argument in the Epistle to the Romans is to show the utter impracticability of this scheme of justification. We need only in this place quote the words in which the apostle sums up his grand conclusion, or sets forth his main position;—thus, "Therefore by *the deeds of the law* there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." This one passage, to such as are willing to abide by the teachings of inspiration, must forever explode the old Jewish scheme of justification by the works of the moral law; and as we know not that any respectable authority in the Christian church since the apostle's days has pleaded for justification in professedly the same way, we may pass this scheme without further notice.

3. Justification by works alone may be understood as implying justification by works of evangelical obedience under the gospel, or those works which proceed from faith, and are performed by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This scheme has had some advocates in different ages of the church, and in modern times has found an able patron in Bishop Bull, the impress of whose views upon this subject is still perceptible upon many of the clergy of the Church of England. The grand argument in support of this scheme has been founded upon the language of St. James, who, it is contended, expressly teaches justification by works; and the effort has been made to reconcile St. Paul to St. James, by alleging that the former, when he denies the possibility of "justification by works," refers only to works of obedience to the Mosaic law; and that, when he teaches justification "by faith," he means the works which spring from faith. We reserve the refutation of this and every other scheme of justification by works, till we come to examine the doctrine of justification by faith only; since the establishment of the latter will disprove the former. They cannot stand together.

IV. *The fourth scheme of justification to be considered is that which teaches that we are justified by faith and works taken together.*

This scheme has had a respectable number of advocates, but they have differed considerably among themselves in reference to the kind of works which are united with faith in justification, and the degree of importance which should be attached to particular works. Dr. Macknight, perhaps one of the ablest defenders the scheme has ever had, presents a

statement of the doctrine in the following words: "And surely it belongeth to God to appoint what conditions or means of justification seemeth to him good. Now that he hath actually made faith and works, not separately, but jointly, the condition of justification, both Paul and James have declared." But Dr. Macknight understood justification to mean, not the pardon of sin in this world, but the sentence of acquittal to be pronounced upon the righteous at the day of final judgment. Hence, according to him, justification is a blessing which no man can attain in this life.

Others, however, who have held to justification by faith and works, have admitted that it takes place in this life; and not a few have attached peculiar importance to some particular works, especially to the ceremony of Christian baptism. This, by some has been considered the great *sine qua non* in order to justification. It is true, they have not considered baptism available for justification in an adult, except it be preceded or accompanied by faith; but when connected with faith, they have considered that ordinance not only as the prescribed means, but also as the only legitimate evidence of justification. Indeed, so much importance has been attached to that ordinance in this connection, that it has been strenuously contended that without baptism there can be no remission of sin. It is difficult to determine, from the manner in which a certain class have expressed themselves, whether it would not be more correct to say that they hold to justification by works; for they certainly attach far more importance to baptism than they do to faith, inasmuch as they say that a proper faith may exist without justification, but a proper baptism cannot.

Closely allied to this notion is the doctrine of the Roman Catholics on the subject of satisfaction, penance, &c. They not only hold that works are essential to the complete remission of sin, but they teach that they are meritorious. They confound justification with sanctification, and contend that we must be inherently righteous before we can be just in the sight of God; and this inherent righteousness, according to them, is derived from the merit of good works. Hence, their peculiar views on the subject of penance, indulgences, purgatory, &c. But the full refutation of all these variant schemes of justification by faith and works united, we trust will be sufficiently apparent in the discussion of the scheme of justification by faith only. We would, however, remark at this time, that the *prima facie* evidence of Scripture is against them, as we read nothing there in reference to justification by faith and works taken together; to be justified "by faith," and to be justified "by works," are both terms used in Scripture; but justification by faith and works is a phrase not found in Holy Writ. We presume the advocates

for this doctrine will not pretend that it is taught by St. Paul, and unless they can find something to sustain it in the Epistle of St. James, we know of no text in the Bible upon which they can predicate a plausible defence of their theory. But as that passage will be particularly examined in the discussion of justification by faith only, we would close the present lecture by presenting one leading objection to all these schemes of justification by works, and by faith and works; it is this:—*All these schemes are either based upon an entire misapprehension of the nature of justification as presented in Scripture, or else they labor under most of the difficulties connected with the schemes of imputation already exhibited.*

We have already shown that, in the Bible acceptance, to *justify* is to *pardon* or *forgive sin*; or, in other words, it is a sentence by which the punishment due to sin is remitted. This is a great and prominent truth, most clearly presented in the New Testament; and most of the difficulties and inconsistencies on the subject of justification may be traced to a disregard of this leading principle; therefore, we should, while on this subject, endeavor to keep it still in view. The proofs on this point already presented we think are very conclusive, but as there is scarce an erroneous scheme of justification but what must necessarily battle with this truth for its own existence, we beg leave at this time to ask a careful attention to the concluding part of the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians. Here we learn that “reconciliation to God,” the “non-imputation of trespasses,” and being “made the righteousness of God,” are phrases that are all used as expressive of the same thing, and as synonymous with justification. The passage admits no other sensible interpretation. If, then, we admit that to justify means to pardon or forgive sin, the schemes now in question are involved at once in inextricable difficulties.

1. As justification means pardon, then, as the Scriptures declare, “God justifieth the *ungodly*,” for none others can need pardon. Hence, we must be pardoned before we become righteous by personal obedience or inherent holiness; therefore, we cannot be justified by those works of obedience which none but the righteous can perform. This would be to require us to do, in order to justification, what can only be done by such as are already justified, which is absurd.

2. If we are justified by works at all, these works must either embrace perfect obedience to the law of God, or they must not; if they do, then the law can demand no more, and we have no need for the death of Christ; if they do not, then we cannot be justified by them; for the law saith, “Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

3. If we are justified by faith and works taken together, then these

works must be either performed before or after justification. If they are performed before justification, then they must be performed while we are in unbelief; "for all that believe are justified;" and if in unbelief, they must be sinful; for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" and if so, it would follow that we are justified by sin, which is absurd. But if the works are performed after justification, then it will follow that the effect precedes the cause, which is also absurd. Indeed, if we are justified by works of evangelical obedience in connection with faith, it would seem inconsistent to say that we can be justified in this life; but if, with Dr. Macknight, we deny this, we deny the Scriptures. But we reserve the full refutation of these schemes for the next lecture.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXIV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Who have been the advocates of the scheme of justification by the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience?</p> <p>2. In what does this differ from the Antinomian plan?</p> <p>3. Have Arminians admitted the use of the phrase "imputed righteousness," at all?</p> <p>4. What is the real point of difference between Calvinists and Arminians, on this subject?</p> <p>5. How does it appear that this scheme either confounds in an unscriptural manner the active and passive righteousness of Christ, or provides us a righteousness unadapted to our condition?</p> <p>6. Does this scheme imply the same absurd fiction as the former one?</p> <p>7. How does it appear that it is perfectly gratuitous?</p> <p>8. In what three different senses may justification by <i>works alone</i> be understood?</p> | <p>9. How is the first seen to be impossible?</p> <p>10. Who have advocated the second?</p> <p>11. Who have advocated the third?</p> <p>12. How does Bishop Bull endeavor to reconcile St. Paul and St. James?</p> <p>13. Have the advocates for justification by <i>faith and works</i> been agreed among themselves?</p> <p>14. What was the peculiar notion of Dr. Macknight?</p> <p>15. In what respect has peculiar importance been attached to a particular work?</p> <p>16. What is the peculiarity of the Roman Catholic view?</p> <p>17. What is the <i>prima facie</i> evidence of Scripture, in reference to these plans?</p> <p>18. What leading objection is presented to them?</p> <p>19. How is this objection sustained?</p> <p>20. What proof is adduced in reference to the Scripture meaning of justification?</p> <p>21. What three difficulties are presented as being connected with all these systems?</p> |
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LECTURE XXV.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

IN the preceding lectures we have considered and endeavored to refute all the different methods proposed for the attainment of justification, except the last, viz., *justification by faith only*, which we named as the method presented in the Scriptures. The present lecture, therefore, will be devoted to the consideration of justification by faith only. We think the evidence already presented contains a satisfactory refutation of all the different schemes of justification which we have considered; but if we can succeed in establishing the position which we now propose, that is, that justification by faith only is the only scheme which the Scriptures authorize, all other schemes will necessarily be thereby disproved, and should be discarded as being doubly refuted. If we can select any doctrine contained in the Scriptures as occupying in the scheme of salvation a more prominent and important position than any other, it is the one now proposed to be established. The great principles upon which it is founded, and with which it is connected, extend throughout the entire gospel system, insomuch that a misapprehension of this leading doctrine will necessarily interrupt the harmony of the parts, and destroy the symmetry of the entire scheme of redemption. As if with a special eye to the importance of the subject, and as if God would exhibit a peculiar concern to render a serious error on so vital a point almost impossible, we find this doctrine not only plainly stated in the Scriptures, but it is repeated again and again in various places; it is particularly dwelt upon, presented in a diversity of aspects, and sustained by a variety of arguments.

But notwithstanding the explicitness and fulness of the Scriptures upon this point, as we have already seen, it is a subject on which there has, from the apostles' day to the present time, been much controversy. St. Paul complains of the Jews of his day, that "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness," were unwilling to "submit themselves to the righteousness of God," or to God's plan of justification. Even so, it has been the case, up to the present time, that the plan of salvation revealed in Scripture,

which proposes unmerited pardon to the ungodly but penitent sinner, upon the simple condition of evangelical faith in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, has not only had to contend against the settled enmity of the human heart, but many of the most learned and pious have, to some extent, misunderstood the true scriptural doctrine of justification by faith. Upon this, as well as upon every other doctrine of Christianity, the teachings of inspiration must be our guide; and we now appeal to their infallible testimony, with the strongest confidence of finding a satisfactory account of the doctrine before us.

I. *We propose showing that the Scriptures do expressly teach the doctrine of justification by faith only.*

That we may perceive clearly the force of the testimony by which we would establish this proposition, we will first briefly define the sense in which we understand that justification is by faith only. And we cannot do this better than in the clear and forcible language of Mr. Wesley. In his sermon on "Justification by Faith," he speaks thus:—"Surely the difficulty of assenting to the proposition that faith is the only condition of justification, must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus much, that it is the only thing without which no one is justified; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As on the one hand, though a man should have everything else without faith, yet he cannot be justified; so on the other, though he be supposed to want everything else, yet if he hath faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak, or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell fire; suppose, I say, this sinner, helpless and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ, (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God,) who can doubt but he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm that any more is indispensably required, before that sinner can be justified?"

We now proceed to the proof.

1. *The first class of texts on which we rely embraces those passages in which faith is directly and expressly presented as the condition or means of justification.*

In Acts xiii. 39, we read, "And by him *all that believe are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Here, justification is promised to "all that believe," which clearly implies (if none can be justified without faith, as all will admit) that faith is presented as the condition.

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul treats expressly of the subject of justification. From that masterly discourse, we next make some quotations. Rom. iii. 26, 28, 30. "To declare, I say, at this time, his

righteousness; that he might be just, and the *justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" "Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified by faith* without the deeds of the law." "Seeing it is one God which *shall justify* the circumcision *by faith*, and uncircumcision *through faith.*" Rom. v. 1, 2. "Therefore *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access *by faith into this grace* wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Gal. iii. 8, 9. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would *justify* the heathen *through faith*, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be *of faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii. 22—24. "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise *by faith* of Jesus Christ might be given to *them that believe.* But before *faith* came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the *faith* which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be *justified by faith.*"

In all these passages, St. Paul most clearly and explicitly declares that justification is by faith. Now, let it be remembered that in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, from which the quotations are made, the apostle is expressly discussing the subject of justification, and is not the conclusion irresistible, that faith is presented as the condition of justification. If the apostle did not design to convey this idea, surely his language is well calculated to mislead. Had he meant that justification was either by works, or by faith and works united, why did he not so express it? The argument from this class of texts, in which quotations might be greatly multiplied, we think must be satisfactory with such as are disposed to abide by the plain declarations of inspiration.

2. *Our second argument is based upon those passages which represent what is manifestly synonymous with justification as being through faith.*

This, it will readily be perceived, is substantially the same argument as the former, the only difference being that in this argument the *term* justification is not used; but if the terms used are of the same import, the evidence is quite as conclusive.

The terms referred to as synonymous with justification are the following:—"Righteousness," "The righteousness of God," "The remission of sins," "The counting or reckoning for righteousness," "The imputation of righteousness," "The non-imputation of sin," "Deliverance from condemnation," &c.

That these terms in Scripture are synonymous with justification, invariably implying that blessing, has already been shown; and we think the very texts themselves, which we shall adduce, bear upon their face

such evidence of this fact, that any further proof, at this time, would be needless. We would, however, say a few things respecting the second phrase presented, which has perhaps given rise to more controversy than any of the others. It is, "The righteousness of God." In reference to this phrase, which occurs in Rom. i. 17, Whitby remarks, "This phrase in St. Paul's style doth always signify the righteousness of faith in Christ Jesus' dying or shedding his blood for us." Doddridge paraphrases it thus:—"That is, the method which God hath contrived and proposed for our becoming righteous, by believing his testimony, and casting ourselves on his mercy." Wesley, Benson, Clarke, Macknight, Watson, Stuart, and, indeed, the great body of learned commentators, perfectly accord with the exposition as quoted from Whitby and Doddridge. To this we might add the testimony of Paul himself, who, in Rom. iii. 22, gives precisely the same comment upon the phrase in question. "Even," says he, "the righteousness of God, which is *by faith of Jesus Christ*."

As we think a particular examination of each of the phrases presented, so as to show that it is synonymous with justification, will be rendered unnecessary by the clearness of the evidence which the passages to be quoted will exhibit, we proceed to present the Scripture testimony under this head. Rom. i. 17. "For therein is *the righteousness of God* revealed *from faith to faith*; as it is written, The just shall live *by faith*." Rom. iii. 21, 22, 25. "But now *the righteousness of God* without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: even *the righteousness of God*, which is *by faith of Jesus Christ*, unto all and upon all them that *believe*." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, *through faith in his blood*, to declare *his righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5, 9. "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham *believed God*, and it was *counted unto him for righteousness*. Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that *justifieth the ungodly*, his *faith is counted for righteousness*." "For we say that *faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness*." Rom. iv. 11, 13. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the *righteousness of the faith* which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that *believe*, though they be not circumcised; that *righteousness might be imputed unto them also*." "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through *the righteousness of faith*." Rom. iv. 22—24. "And therefore it (faith) *was imputed to him for righteousness*. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that *it was imputed to him*; but for us also,

to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Rom. ix. 31, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the *law of righteousness*, hath not attained to the *law of righteousness*. Wherefore? Because they sought it not *by faith*, but as it were by the *works of the law*: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." Rom. x. 4—10. "For Christ is the end of the law *for righteousness to every one that believeth*. For Moses describeth the *righteousness* which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the *righteousness which is of faith* speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of *faith*, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *shalt believe in thy heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man *believeth unto righteousness*; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Gen. xv. 6. "And he (Abraham) *believed in the Lord*; and he counted it to him for *righteousness*." Gal. iii. 6. "Even as Abraham *believed God*, and it was accounted to him for *righteousness*." Gal. v. 5, 6. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of *righteousness by faith*. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but *faith* which worketh by love." Phil. iii. 9. "And be found in him, not having *mine own righteousness which is of the law*, but that which is *through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*." Heb. xi. 7. Noah, it is said, "became heir of the *righteousness which is by faith*." Acts x. 43. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*." John iii. 18. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

We think it impossible for any unprejudiced mind carefully to examine the above Scriptures, without being satisfied that the terms "*Righteousness*," "*Righteousness of God*," "*Remission of sins*," "*Counting or reckoning for righteousness*," "*The imputation of righteousness*," "*The non-imputation of sin*," and "*Deliverance from condemnation*," all imply the same thing as justification; but, as all these are said to be by or through faith, it necessarily follows that justification is by faith.

3. *Our third argument is based upon such passages as present what are necessary and inseparable concomitants of justification as being by or through faith.*

There are presented in the Scriptures several blessings, which, though distinct in their nature from justification, invariably accompany it, and never can exist but in connection with it. Now, it must be admitted, that, if two or more things never exist except in connection with each other, whatever is indispensable to the existence of one must be indispensable to the existence of the others. Whatever would lead to the existence of one would necessarily lead to the existence of the others. Or, in other words, whatever is the grand indispensable condition to the existence of the one must sustain the same relation to the others. For illustration of this argument, we would refer to the familiar relation of husband and wife. These relations necessarily imply the existence of each other. They are inseparable concomitants. Although the two relations are not identical,—the husband is not the wife, nor the wife the husband,—yet the relation of husband cannot exist without the relation of wife, nor the relation of wife without that of husband. Now, is it not clear from this, that whatever would necessarily lead to the existence of the one relation would also lead to the existence of the other; and whatever would prevent the existence of the one relation would necessarily prevent the existence of the other. Apply this principle of reasoning to the subject in hand; regeneration, adoption, and salvation, in a certain sense, are inseparable concomitants of justification;—the one cannot exist without the others. Whoever is justified, is born of God, or regenerated, adopted, and, in a certain sense, saved; and none can be regenerated, adopted, or saved, in that sense, but the justified. From this it will follow that whatever leads to the one of these concomitant blessings must lead to the others; and whatever would prevent the one must prevent the others. Or, in other words, whatever is the grand condition to the existence of the one sustains the same relation to the others.

Now, if we can show from the Scriptures that we are regenerated, adopted, and saved, through or by faith, it will necessarily follow that we are justified through or by faith. This we think will be evident from the following Scriptures:—Rom. i. 16. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto *salvation* to every one that *believeth*; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Eph. ii. 8. “For by grace are ye *saved through faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Luke vii. 50. “And he said to the woman, *Thy faith hath saved thee*; go in peace.” John xx. 31. “But these are written that ye *might believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing* ye *might have life* through his name.” Mark xvi. 16. “He that *believeth* and is baptized *shall be saved*; but he that *believeth not shall be damned*.” Acts xvi. 31. “*Believe on the Lord*

Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." 2 Tim. iii. 15. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." John i. 12, 13. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Acts xv. 9. "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xxvi. 18. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Gal. iii. 26. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

From the above Scriptures, it is undeniable that faith is the necessary condition of regeneration, adoption, and salvation; but as these are inseparable concomitants of justification, it follows that faith is the necessary condition of justification.

4. *Our fourth argument is based upon such passages as show that justification is by grace, and not of works.*

In the xi. 6 of Romans we have these words: "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." From this Scripture it is evident that grace and works are opposed to each other. Whatever is of grace cannot be of works, and whatever is of works cannot be of grace. In Rom. iv. 16, we read, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." From this text it is evident that faith and grace are so connected that justification cannot be by grace unless it is of faith. Hence, if we can prove that justification is not of works but of grace, it will follow that it must be by faith. This we think will appear from the following Scriptures:—Rom. iii. 20, 27, 28. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. iv. 4, 5. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. iii. 24. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 2, 11. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith." Gal. ii. 16. "Know-

ing, that a man *is not justified by the works of the law*, but by the *faith* of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be *justified by the faith of Christ*, and not by the works of the law; for *by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*" Gal. v. 4. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are *justified by the law*; ye are *fallen from grace.*"

From the above Scriptures, it is evident that justification is not of works, but of grace; therefore, it must be by faith. We think the foregoing evidence proves conclusively, that justification by faith is the plain doctrine of the Bible.

II. Before we enter upon the consideration of the objections which have been urged against this doctrine, we, secondly, proceed further to illustrate the sense in which it should be understood. By faith, as the condition of justification, we are not to understand that it is absolutely and in every sense the cause of justification. Far from it. The love or grace of God is the original moving cause. The efficient cause is the Holy Spirit, "who takes of the things that are Christ's, and shows them unto us." The meritorious cause is the death of Christ. The instrumental cause, on God's part, is the word of God. But the conditional cause, on our part, is faith.

As we have seen, justification by works, which implies perfect conformity to the first covenant, is to us impossible; Christ hath satisfied for our breach of the first covenant, by suffering "for us," and we are now placed under the new covenant of grace. To become personally righteous under this covenant, we must comply with its conditions. God, who graciously placed us under this covenant, has a right to prescribe the condition upon which we shall be accepted under it. This, we have shown, is faith. By the satisfaction or atonement of Christ, we are not to understand that men are absolutely and unconditionally freed from the demands of the covenant of works. They are only unconditionally freed so far as to be placed under the new covenant. Those of whom conditions are required can only be delivered from the curse of the law by complying with the condition of faith; hence, Christ is said to be "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." When we believe, faith is imputed to us for evangelical righteousness. Had Jesus Christ done all that he did for sinners without prescribing faith as the condition of justification, faith then could not have been imputed to us for righteousness. It derives its efficacy from the appointment of God; and had the wisdom of God prescribed love to God, or anything else, as the condition of pardon, instead of faith, it is very clear that love to God, or whatever else had been prescribed, would then have sustained the same relation to our justification that faith now sustains.

But the question may be asked, are not other duties enjoined in Scripture, as well as faith; and if so, how can it be said that we are justified by faith *only*? To this we may reply, that other duties, it is true, are enjoined, but the Scriptures nowhere make them, like faith, the absolute and invariable condition of justification. Indeed, as we have seen from the Scriptures that faith is the condition in such sense that none can be justified without it, and all who have it are that moment justified, it necessarily follows, that nothing else can be a condition in the same sense, without a contradiction. Suppose, for illustration, that Christ had made the taking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper the condition of justification in the same sense in which we have proved faith to be the condition; then it would follow that none can be justified without partaking of that sacrament, and that all who do partake thereof are that moment justified. Now, is it not manifest that an individual might partake of the supper without faith? and if so, he must that moment either be justified, or not. If we say he is justified, then it follows that faith cannot be the condition of justification in the sense specified; but if we say he is not that moment justified, then it follows that partaking of the supper cannot be the condition of justification in the sense specified. The two conditions cannot be reconciled; they imply a manifest contradiction. If the Scriptures exhibit faith to be the condition of justification in the sense above, then it follows that, unless the Scriptures flatly contradict themselves, they cannot teach that anything else separate and distinct from faith is a condition in the same sense. And thus it is evident, that, in showing that we are justified by faith in the sense above, it is clearly implied that justification is by faith *only*; that is, faith is the thing made the condition of justification in this important sense.

Other things, such as repentance, prayer, &c., may be in a correct sense said to be required; but it is only as they are connected with faith, and because they are thus connected, as being presupposed as necessary antecedents, as contained in it, as implied as its immediate fruits, or as necessary subservient means or consequents. In a principal action, all its parts, necessary antecedents, subservient actions, and immediate and necessary consequents, are properly implied. Thus, "If the besieged be bound by articles to surrender the town to the besiegers at such a time, it need not be expressed in the articles that they shall withdraw their guards and cease resistance,—open the gates, and yield up this house, or that street; all this is implied clearly in the articles of capitulation." Even so, faith, the great condition of justification, may imply all the rest in a certain sense. Hearing the word and repentance may be necessary antecedents; knowledge of Christ, assent to the truth of

the gospel, relying on the merits of Christ, and coming to and receiving Christ as an almighty, all-sufficient, present Saviour, are necessary concomitants or properties of faith; denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily, hearing, praying, meditating, and attendance upon the ordinances of the gospel, may be connected with faith, either as antecedents or consequents. Yet none of these external means, nor all of them taken together, are made the condition of justification in the same important sense in which, as we have seen, faith is presented. Except so far as some of them are synonymous with or implied in faith, they may all exist without justification, or justification may take place in the absence of any or all of them.

III. We proceed, in the last place, to consider some of the leading *objections to the doctrine of justification by faith only*. They may all, so far as we consider them deserving any notice, be embraced in two:—first, it is objected to this doctrine, that the Scriptures teach justification by evangelical obedience; secondly, it is said that the Scriptures teach justification by baptism. These two leading objections we will now briefly consider.

1. *First, it is objected that the doctrine of justification by faith only, is inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach in reference to justification by evangelical obedience.*

That we may perceive the true force of this objection, we here observe, that the word *justify* is sometimes used in Scripture in relation to that sentence of acquittal or condemnation which shall be awarded to every man at the day of judgment. In this sense it is used by our Saviour in Matt. xii. 37. “For by *thy words thou shalt be justified*, and by *thy words thou shalt be condemned*.” This justification is in a certain sense by works; for “words” in the text denote the *entire actions*; but this is not by the merit of works, but only implies that we are justified by the evidence of our works, or that we are to be rewarded, as the Scriptures repeatedly declare, “according to our works.” So that we remark, in reference to this justification, 1. It is not by works on the ground of merit, but only by the evidence or measure of works. 2. These works themselves are not contemplated in the abstract, but only as connected with and growing out of evangelical faith. 3. This justification is entirely a distinct and separate thing from the justification in question. The justification generally spoken of in the Scriptures, of which St. Paul treats so largely in the letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, and which we have presented as being by faith only, means pardon for the guilt of past sin bestowed upon the believer the moment he believes. Hence, it is apparent that anything affirmed in reference to justification at the day of judgment, can have no bearing on the subject in hand.

The Scripture mainly relied upon in defence of justification by works of evangelical obedience, in opposition to justification by faith only, is the Epistle of St. James. To this, we will, for a few moments, direct our attention. Some have rashly concluded that St. James, on the subject of justification, contradicts St. Paul. Under this view, Luther rejected the Epistle of James from the canon of Scripture, calling it "an epistle of straw." The great body of the church have not, however, doubted its authority; and many different plans have been presented to reconcile the seeming contradictions of the two apostles. To enter extensively into the controversy which has been connected with this subject, would be tedious, and we think unnecessary. All that seems to be required is, to show that St. James does not contradict what we have seen to be so clearly taught by St. Paul, and so fully set forth in the Scriptures. This, we think, will not be difficult to evince. The contradiction supposed between the two apostles respects what they have written in reference to the justification of Abraham. That there can be no discrepancy between them, we think will be evident from the following considerations.

(1.) They do not refer to the same event. St. Paul speaks of the justification of Abraham when the promise of the seed was made to him before the birth of Isaac; St. James speaks of the justification of Abraham when "he offered Isaac his son upon the altar." The two justifications were so far from being the same, that they stand in history about twenty-five years asunder. Hence, whatever St. James may say, he cannot contradict St. Paul, as they speak of entirely different transactions.

(2.) The two apostles do not speak of the same faith;—they do not use the term in the same sense. St. Paul speaks of that faith which confides or trusts in the merits of Christ for salvation; which "works by love and purifies the heart;" which implies "believing with the heart unto righteousness;" in a word, he speaks of a living, active, powerful, evangelical faith. St. James speaks of a "dead" faith, a faith which is "alone," a mere assent of the understanding; such a faith as the "devils" possessed. So far from St. Paul affirming that we are justified by such a faith as this, he said not one word in reference to such faith. The faith of which he spoke is never "alone," though it alone justifies. Hence it is manifest, that, when St. James asks the question, "Can faith save him?" he does not mean the same faith spoken of by Paul when he affirms that "we are justified by faith;" consequently, there can be no contradiction between them.

(3.) The two apostles do not use the term justification in the same sense. That St. Paul uses the term as synonymous with pardon, or the remission of sins, has been abundantly proved. That St. James does

not use the term in this sense, is evident from the case of Abraham appealed to for illustration. In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, where Moses records the transaction referred to by St. Paul, he declares that "he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Now, if we understand St. James to affirm that Abraham was not pardoned till years afterward, when he offered Isaac upon the altar, we make him contradict both Paul and Moses, and we may set ourselves to reconciling him with the latter as well as the former. But surely this view cannot be maintained. Hence we conclude, that the two apostles could not use the term justification in the same sense. St. James, by the term, can only mean that the faith of Abraham was manifested or proved to be genuine; his works were a manifestation or evidence of his former justification by faith; or they may be taken as a proof that he had not forfeited his justification by apostasy. So that, in this accommodated sense of the term, the only sense consistent with the history of the case, and a sense not at all used by St. Paul, Abraham was said, by James, to be justified "by works." Hence we conclude, that, when St. James says, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," he does not refer to the same kind of justification of which St. Paul treats; consequently, there can be no contradiction between them. As this is the main reliance of the advocates for justification by evangelical obedience in opposition to the doctrine of justification by faith only, and as we find here nothing irreconcilable with the view of the doctrine which we have advocated, we deem it unnecessary to pursue this subject further.

2. In the last place, we notice the objection, that the doctrine of justification by faith only is *inconsistent with what the Scriptures teach concerning justification or remission of sins by baptism*.

If, by such as urge the above objection, the meaning be, merely that baptism is a means of grace, which, like hearing the word, prayer, and various other means, should be used sincerely, in reference to, or as helps to, the exercise of evangelical faith, there can be no controversy; for all this is freely admitted. But if the meaning be that baptism is the condition of justification in such sense as we have shown faith to be,—that is, that it is a condition in such sense that none can be justified or have their sins remitted without it, and that all who are baptized are that moment justified,—if this be the meaning, then do we most explicitly repudiate the notion, as being unscriptural and pernicious.

Again; if it be contended that faith and baptism united are the condition of justification, in the sense above defined, this modification of the subject we consider equally unscriptural and pernicious with the one above named. The first view presented, which admits baptism, like the

hearing of the gospel or prayer, to be a condition as a means of grace, being, in no sense, incompatible with the view presented of justification by faith only, we presume cannot be the sense in which the abettors of this objection understand the subject. The two latter views, that is, first, that baptism, or second, that faith and baptism united, are the condition of justification in the sense in which we have defined faith to be, must be considered as embracing the meaning of the objectors. We shall therefore endeavor to consider the claims of both these notions, in view of Scripture and reason. This much we would here premise, that, as we have already shown from numerous and explicit declarations of Scripture that faith is the absolute and indispensable condition of justification, and as we have also shown that to suppose two such conditions involves a contradiction, it will necessarily follow, that, if the Scriptures do authorize the view of the objectors, as just defined, the Book of God must be charged with self-contradiction. But we rejoice to believe that a brief examination of the Scriptures relied upon by the abettors of the objection in question, will discover to us that we need have no such apprehension.

Those who make baptism the only appointed means of remission rely almost exclusively upon the following passages:—Acts ii. 38. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts xxii. 16. “And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” 1 Peter iii. 21. “The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” I think it will be admitted by all intelligent and candid persons, that, when a passage of Scripture is susceptible of two different constructions, the one perfectly consistent with all other Scriptures, and the other irreconcilable with a number of plain declarations of Scripture, the former interpretation should be adopted. Taking this rule of interpretation, which we think none can oppose, as the basis of our reasoning, we would now consider the above texts.

(1.) We will show that they may, without violence, be construed so as not to conflict with the doctrine of justification by faith only, as we have defined and endeavored to establish it.

(2.) We shall show the violence to many plain declarations of the Bible which the construction required by the objectors in question would involve.

(1.) Then we inquire, how can these passages be explained in accordance with our views of justification by faith only?

First, in reference to the words of Peter, in the second chapter of the Acts, we remark, that the "remission of sins," it is true, is here promised in connection with baptism. But, we ask, is it not in connection with something more than baptism, both expressed and implied? The words are, "repent, and be baptized." Here repentance is expressed, and faith is evidently implied, as being connected with repentance. If we deny this, we admit that sins may be remitted without faith, and contradict the whole tenor of Scripture; if we admit this, then we admit that these persons may have been justified by faith only. Baptism is a sign or emblem of the cleansing of the soul, and all who faithfully use the sign have here the promise of the thing signified; but can any say that this is absolutely connected with the sign, whether it be faithfully used or not? We think this can scarcely be contended for; and if so, then it follows that baptism is not the essential condition in the case, but the faith with which it was required to be used. They are commanded to "repent and be baptized, *εἰς, in order to* the remission of sins," that is, to use these means with reference to the end in view, which will certainly accompany the means when used in faith; but, at the same time, the faith implied as connected with, or as being obtained in, the use of the means, is the availing condition, as it alone can apprehend the merits of that "blood, without the shedding of which there can be no remission." But that faith was here connected with the use of the means, and that it, and not baptism, nor yet baptism and faith taken together, was the real condition through which the spiritual blessing promised was communicated, we are not left to conclude by mere inference. The same apostle who here gave the command to "repent and be baptized," promising "remission of sins," and "the gift of the Holy Ghost," refers to this matter in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, and testifies, (speaking of the Gentiles,) that God gave "them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us, (the Jews,) and put no difference between us (Jews at Pentecost) and them, (the Gentiles,) *purifying their hearts by faith.*" Now, as justification, or "remission of sins," is inseparably connected with the purification of the heart spoken of, we have the direct testimony of Peter himself, that these Jews at Pentecost were justified, not by baptism, but "by faith."

The same mode of explanation which we have above presented will equally apply to the next passage;—the words of Ananias to Saul, Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" Here baptism is not alone, but is connected with "calling on the name of the Lord," which is used here, as in the

Scriptures frequently, as another expression for evangelical faith. This same person who was here commanded to "wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord," affirms, in the tenth chapter to the Romans, that "whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*" It is beyond controversy that this implied *faith*, and, therefore, the passage in question, so far from disproving the doctrine of justification by faith, is no inconsiderable evidence in its favor.

The last text we proposed to examine in this connection, is 1 Peter iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us," &c. Here it may be sufficient to observe, that the apostle, as if by special design to guard us against the notion which we are now opposing, takes special pains, by the use of parenthesis, to define the sense in which he uses the word baptism. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh;" that is, it is not the external rite of washing the body with water that "saves us;" but it is "the answer of a good conscience towards God;" — that is, it is the internal baptism, or purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit *through faith*, (which alone could impart a "good conscience,") that "doth now save us." We think, from what we have now presented, it will be manifest to the unprejudiced mind, that the texts adduced may be construed, without violence, in consistency with the doctrine of justification by faith only.

We conclude the present lecture by presenting a few of the difficulties which are necessarily involved in the notion that baptism, or even baptism in connection with faith, is the condition of justification.

1. If baptism be the prescribed and only means of justification or pardon, then it will follow, either that the ordinance must be repeated in order to forgiveness, every time the baptized person subsequently commits sin, or that there are two different methods of justification. The former is contrary to the practice of the apostolic as well as all modern churches; the latter is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which recognizes but one "sacrifice for sin," and but one mode of access to that sacrifice.

2. This scheme of justification leaves us without any evidence that the apostles themselves were ever justified; for, although they were commissioned to preach the gospel, and to baptize the nations, there is no proof that they themselves ever were baptized under the gospel economy. If it be said that they baptized each other, we reply, this is assertion without proof; but were we to admit the fact, some one of them must have been the first, and, consequently, he must have administered the ordinance while he himself was under condemnation.

3. This scheme, which inseparably connects the remission of sins with baptism, either implies that God saves the heathen without the

"remission of sins" at all, or that none of them can be saved. Either position is repugnant to Scripture.

4 This scheme of justification is contrary to the Scripture history. Christ, when here upon earth, said to various individuals, "Thy sins are forgiven, go in peace and sin no more;" and to the thief on the cross, he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In these cases two things are certain: 1. There was real "remission of sins;" for so it is either undeniably implied, or expressly declared. 2. There was no baptism, nor any other work of obedience; but the simple exercise of faith. The language of the great Teacher was, "Be it according to thy faith." "Thy faith hath saved thee." Or, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." There is not one word in reference to baptism. Indeed, it is undeniable that there was no such thing.

Again; while Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius, (Acts x.,) and declaring "that whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins," the Holy Ghost fell on the people, and they "magnified God." Now, that this implied the renewing influence of the Spirit, as well as miraculous gifts, is evident from the fact that they were immediately admitted to church fellowship, not as having the promise of remission in baptism which was proposed, but they were recommended to baptism on the ground of what they had already received. If we say that they did not receive the "remission of sins" previous to baptism, then we admit that the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they were recommended by the apostle for church communion in consequence thereof, while they were in a state of guilt and condemnation; and, moreover, that Peter commanded them to be baptized, (although as Gentiles they of all persons the most needed full instruction,) without one word, so far as the narrative shows, on the subject of the "remission of sins," as connected with that baptism. If we say that they received "remission of sins" previous to baptism, then the point in controversy is fairly surrendered. Nor can this be evaded by saying that this was the first introduction of the gospel among the Gentiles. What if it was? Unless it can be proved that God designed to make the plan of salvation different among the Gentiles in its commencement from what it was to be in its progress, the fact of its being the commencement of the gospel with them cannot affect the question before us in the least. To say that this case was an exception to the general rule, and that the case on the day of Pentecost was the true model of God's regular method of justification, is perfectly gratuitous. It is a human invention; a fiction of our own, without a word or syllable of Scripture for its support. Why not say that the case at Pentecost was the exception, and this, in the house of Cornelius, the regular plan? If we may make laws, and exceptions to

laws, in the kingdom of Christ, at pleasure, the latter would seem rather the more plausible of the two, especially as the Christian church has hitherto been mainly composed of Gentile converts.

The truth is, baptism, like other means of grace, may either precede or follow the act of faith which justifies. Faith being the great and only indispensable condition of pardon, and as it may be exercised either before or after, or even in the act of baptism, there is, on this hypothesis, no difficulty in harmonizing the two cases under consideration. But by the scheme of baptismal justification, as presented above, they are perfectly irreconcilable.

5. But the crowning objection to the whole scheme is its direct opposition to the general tenor of the Scriptures. If we admit it, we must directly contradict a vast number of plain declarations of the inspired Record, and render a good portion of the Bible absurd and ridiculous. This may soon be made manifest.

(1.) The Scriptures everywhere represent justification, or the forgiveness of sins, as the proper work of God; and nowhere is it presented as a work of man, either as the prime or constituted agent. When the Great Jehovah proclaimed, under circumstances of the deepest solemnity, his character to Moses, one of its essential properties was declared to be the prerogative of "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." When the Jews exhibited against the Son of God the foul charge of blasphemy, their principal specification was, that he had said to the paralytic, "Thy sins are forgiven thee:" this is blasphemy, exclaimed the Jews; for "Who can forgive sins but God?" and St. Paul declares, "It is God that justifieth." Now, if baptism be the act which justifies, and which invariably remits sin, does it not follow that the administrator of the ordinance is the agent in justification? And thus this doctrine is closely allied to the papal absurdity of remission by the priest.

(2.) The Scriptures everywhere represent that justification by works is impossible; but if we are justified by baptism, since it is undeniable that it is, in the proper sense, a work, it follows that the word of God expressly contradicts itself; for the apostle declares "that a man is justified by faith *without the deeds of the law.*"

(3.) If baptism be the essential and invariable condition of pardon, how can those Scriptures be true which represent that salvation is possible to all men who have not squandered their day of gracious visitation; and that, not at some future period, but immediately, without any delay, except what arises from the state of the sinner's heart? That such is the general tenor of Scripture, we think will not be denied. Upon the supposition that faith is the grand essential condition, we perceive at once its perfect adaptation to all circumstances and conditions; to all

climates and to all places. Neither cold, nor drought, nor time, nor place, nor disease, nor prison, which may frequently preclude the possibility of baptism, and consequently the possibility of salvation, according to the theory of remission which we now oppose, can insuperably obstruct the salvation of any man, on the principle of justification by faith.

6. Lastly, if the system of justification against which we have been speaking be admitted, then it will follow, that, in all places where justification or salvation is spoken of, and anything mentioned as the condition thereof, the specified condition may be omitted, and baptism substituted for it, in consistency with the gospel scheme. Apply this rule to the following Scriptures, and let any intelligent and sober person determine whether, as Baxter has expressed it, "the word of God" ought to be thus "audaciously corrected." "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." "He that *believeth* on him is not condemned; but he that *believeth not* is condemned already, because he hath *not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now, if baptism be the absolute and essential condition of salvation, it necessarily follows that without violence it may be here substituted for faith; then the passages would read thus:—"He that is *not baptized* shall be damned." "He that *is baptized* in his name is *not condemned*; but he that *is not baptized* in his name *is condemned* already, because he *hath not been baptized* in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The above is sufficient to show how ridiculous such a paraphrase would render the word of God. Many such passages might be quoted, in which, to substitute baptism for faith, would be nothing better than trifling with the sacred word.

We consider it needless to pursue the subject further. We think we have shown clearly that there can, in the very nature of the subject, be but one absolute and invariable condition of justification. And we think it must be obvious, from what has been presented, what that condition is. Baptism it cannot be; for there is not one text in the Bible which attributes it to that ordinance alone. It is attributed to baptism, to repentance, to conversion, to prayer, and various other things, in connection with faith; but never to any one of them, nor to all of them taken together, in the absence of faith. On the other hand, there are near a hundred plain passages of Scripture that attribute salvation or justification (which mutually imply each other) to faith, as the only essential condition. We therefore close, by repeating, as the conclusion of this investigation, the following declaration:—*Justification is by faith only, in such sense that none can be justified without faith, and all who have it are justified.* Or, in the words of the Methodist Discipline, (9 Article,) "That we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXV.

- QUESTION 1. How is justification *by faith only* defined?
2. What is the character of the first class of texts adduced?
 3. Repeat some of them.
 4. What is the second class?
 5. In what does this differ from the former argument?
 6. What are some of the principal texts of this class?
 7. What is the third class of texts?
 8. How is this argument explained?
 9. What are some of the texts in reference to *salvation by faith*?
 10. In reference to *regeneration*?
 11. In reference to *adoption*?
 12. Upon what class of texts is the fourth argument based?
 13. What are some of the principal texts?
 14. What is the *efficient* cause of justification?
 15. The *meritorious* cause?
 16. The *moving* cause?
 17. The *instrumental* cause, on *God's part*?
 18. The *conditional* cause, on *our part*?
 19. From what does the justifying efficacy of faith result?
 20. In what sense are prayer and other duties necessary to justification?
 21. Can there be two absolute and distinct conditions of justification?
 22. How can this be proved?
 23. What are the two principal grounds of objection to the doctrine of justification by faith alone?
 24. By what Scriptures is justification by evangelical obedience attempted to be sustained?
 25. What kind of justification is by works, and in what sense?
 26. How are James and Paul reconciled?
 27. In what sense is it contended that justification is by baptism?
 28. What Scriptures are relied upon?
 29. How may they be explained?
 30. What is the first difficulty said to be connected with justification by baptism?
 31. The second?
 32. The third?
 33. The fourth?
 34. The fifth?
 35. How is the last difficulty illustrated?

LECTURE XXVI.

REGENERATION.

THE divinity of the Bible is a beautiful and harmonious system, consisting of a variety of important principles, closely connected and mutually dependent upon each other. As the malformation of a single wheel would derange all the parts of a complicated piece of machinery, so a radical error in relation to one important doctrine generally extends its influence throughout the entire gospel system. This truth is nowhere more manifest than in connection with the subject now to be considered. Regeneration is a grand focal point, occupying a central position in theology. Here all the important doctrines of the gospel meet; and any radical error in the theories of men may generally be detected. For it may well be said, that whoever is sound in his entire view of the doctrine of regeneration, cannot be seriously erroneous in any essential doctrine of salvation; but, on the other hand, a radical error in this doctrine will not only extend its influence to almost every leading doctrine of Christianity, but it will endanger the salvation of the soul. All this will be obvious when it is reflected that regeneration implies what is commonly understood by experimental religion. It contemplates that vital change in the moral character which constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the Christian, and which alone can give title to heaven hereafter. He who holds not the essential truth here, errs where error may be tremendously fatal; but he whose theory, experience and life, accord with the orthodox views of regeneration, may embrace in his system of theology much "wood, hay, and stubble," which shall be burned, "yet he himself shall be saved." In reference to this point especially, every serious inquirer after salvation should prayerfully "search the Scriptures," in constant remembrance of the Divine monition, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." But he that not only fatally errs on this subject, but "teaches men" to follow him,— "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the midst of the sea." May the Spirit of Truth enlighten our understandings, that on this important subject we may have correct thoughts and speak right words!

I. *We inquire what is implied in regeneration?* This word occurs

but twice in the New Testament ; — Matt. xix. 28, and Titus iii. 5. In the first mentioned place, the Greek word is *παλιγγενεσία*, which signifies *reproduction, restoration, or renovation*. In Titus, the word is the same, only varying in case, and has the same import. Although the same word, having the same general import, is used in both places, yet, the learned have generally agreed that it does not imply, in both cases, a renovation of the same kind.

In Matthew, our Saviour says to the apostles, “Ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The sense of this passage is materially affected by the punctuation. Whitby, Benson, Wesley, Clarke, Watson, and the learned commentators, with few exceptions, so far as we have examined, connect the clause, “in the regeneration,” with what follows. But even then, they differ in the application. Some understand “the regeneration” to refer to the millennial state ; others, to the general resurrection and day of judgment ; but others, we think, with more propriety, refer it to the perfected gospel dispensation. This, then, being adopted as the most consistent interpretation of the passage, it follows that “regeneration.” in this place, has no reference to the change of personal character constituting an individual a son of God, but a change in the state of things ; — a renovation of the church, implying the dissolution of the old, and the establishment of the new, dispensation.

The passage in Titus reads as follows : — “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of *regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Here, as most commentators think, “washing of regeneration” refers to the rite of baptism ; but not to the external rite alone, or even mainly. The word “washing” more properly refers to the rite, and “regeneration” to the moral change signified thereby. So constantly was the thing signified present in the minds of the primitive Christians when they contemplated the sign, that they might, without danger of misapprehension, only mention the one, when both were evidently implied. But that “regeneration,” in this place, implies the renewing of the heart, appears obvious from the succeeding clause, “and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” which is intimately connected with, and exegetical of, what precedes. Hence we conclude, that, in this passage, the term “regeneration” is applied to that moral renovation of character which constitutes an individual a child of God and an heir of eternal life.

So general has been the use of the term regeneration, as expressive of the moral change above mentioned, by theologians in all ages of the church, that, even if the word itself were not found in Scripture, there

could be no impropriety in its use, as its agreed sense is clearly and repeatedly expressed by various other terms. Thus it is called a "passing from death unto life;"—a being "born again;"—"born of the Spirit;"—"born of God;"—being "in Christ;"—"a new creature;"—"created anew," &c. When, therefore, we speak of "regeneration," we mean that change in man expressed in Scripture by such terms as we have just quoted. Our present inquiry is to ascertain what that change implies.

1. *It does not mean a mere conversion from infidelity to a historical belief of the facts, and a theoretical belief of the truths, of the gospel.* Regeneration presupposes, but does not consist in, mere orthodox views in religion. A person may understand and believe, theoretically, the doctrines of the gospel, and yet be an utter stranger to experimental and practical godliness; and, consequently, in a state of alienation from God, and exposure to his wrath and righteous indignation.

2. *It does not consist in mere morality or external reformation.* This, likewise, regeneration requires, but all this may exist while the heart is unrenewed, and the soul under condemnation.

3. *It does not mean a mere external profession of religion.* God has instituted his church in the world, and commanded that there should be "added unto the church daily" such as embrace the gospel by faith; but, in every age, there have been a portion of spurious disciples;—persons either deceived themselves, or wickedly deceiving others. "All are not Israel that are of Israel;" the "tares and the wheat" still "grow together;" and in the pale of the visible church are embraced many who know nothing of the spirituality of religion.

4. *Nor does it imply a mere observance of all the forms, ordinances, and external duties of religion.* Had this been all that was required, then the Pharisees would have been acceptable worshippers, and Saul of Tarsus might have pleaded the righteousness of the law. But it is "not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom;" nor he that merely performs the external duties of religion; but such as are Christians in heart, "delighting in the law of God after the inward man," and having "the power" as well as "the form of godliness."

5. *Regeneration does not imply new faculties of either body or soul.* These have become deranged and contaminated by the fall, but not annihilated. The ungodly have eyes and ears to read and hear the word of God, as well as believers. And they likewise have all the faculties of the soul necessary for the exercise of every spiritual grace. Religion imparts no new faculty, but only regulates and purifies those that already exist.

But we now inquire, *positively*, what regeneration does imply.

1. Regeneration may be defined to be *a radical change in the moral character, from the love, practice, and dominion of sin, to the love of God, and to the internal exercise and external practice of holiness.* Or, as Mr. Watson expresses it, it is "Deliverance from the bondage of sin, and the power and the will to do all things which are pleasing to God, both as to inward habits and outward acts."

The above definition, it will readily appear, is sustained by the following passages :—1 John iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Rom. vi. 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." 18th verse. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." 22d verse. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end everlasting life." The native state of the heart is hatred to God. "The carnal mind," that is, the unrenewed sinful nature, is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is only Divine grace, regenerating the soul, that can slay this enmity, "turn back our nature's rapid tide," and cause the affections of the soul to flow out after God and heavenly objects. The apostle John says, "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;" and "He that loveth not knoweth not God." And again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and further, "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments," and "Every one which doeth righteousness is born of him."

From the Scriptures adduced, we may learn, 1. An unregenerate soul can neither love nor obey God while in that state. 2. Every regenerated soul loves God supremely, loves the people of God sincerely and affectionately, and engages willingly and heartily in the service of God, by obeying his commandments.

2. *Regeneration stands closely connected with, but is distinct from, justification and adoption.*

Mr. Wesley says, in his sermon on "the new birth," that justification "relates to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins;" and that regeneration "relates to the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature." "In order of time, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also 'born of the Spirit;' but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts."

In reference to regeneration, justification, and adoption, Mr. Watson observes, "They occur at the same time, and they all enter into the experience of the same person; so that no man is justified without being regenerated and adopted, and no man is regenerated and made a son of God, who is not justified. Whenever they are mentioned in Scripture, they, therefore, involve and imply each other; a remark which may preserve us from some errors. Thus, with respect to our heirship, and consequent title to eternal life, in Titus iii. 7, it is grounded upon our justification. 'For we are justified by his grace, that we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' In 1 Pet. i. 3, it is connected with our regeneration. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance,' &c. Again; in Rom. viii. 17, it is grounded upon our adoption — 'If children, then heirs.' These passages are a sufficient proof that justification, regeneration, and adoption, are not distinct and different titles, but constitute one and the same title, through the gift of God in Christ, to the heavenly inheritance." — (Theological Institutes.)

II. *We now inquire, how is the blessing of regeneration attained?* By what is the great change which it implies produced? Upon this important subject there are three leading theories.

1. The first theory is, that this change is effected by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and that the mind of man is perfectly passive therein.

2. The second is what may be styled the theory of self-conversion. It allows no direct Divine influence, but maintains that the truth acts upon the mind by way of moral suasion, and through it alone the sinner submits to the plan of salvation, and obeys the Divine command in the ordinance of baptism; — and this is said to constitute regeneration.

3. The third theory occupies middle ground between the two above given, and, as we hope to be able to show, is in accordance with the Scriptures. It embraces both Divine and human agency as being concerned in the work. This theory is expressed by Dr. Fisk (see "Calvinistic Controversy") in the following two propositions: — "1. The work of regeneration is performed by the direct and efficient operations of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. 2. The Holy Spirit exerts this regenerating power only on conditions, to be first complied with by the subject of the change."

We would now consider each of these theories in order.

1. The theory which teaches that man is perfectly passive in regeneration is properly the Calvinistic scheme, as the following quotations

will evince. In the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 10, we read these words:—"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace *alone*, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." In Buck's "Theological Dictionary," under the head of "Regeneration," and in reference to it, we have these words:—"The properties of it (regeneration) are these: 1. It is a passive work, and herein it differs from conversion. In regeneration we are passive, and receive from God; in conversion we are active, and turn to him. 2. It is an irresistible, or rather an invincible, work of God's grace."

That the Calvinistic notion is not only that regeneration is a passive work, but that it is the first effect of saving grace on the heart, and precedes both repentance and faith, will be further evident from the following quotations. The great Charnock, as quoted by Buck, uses these words:—"In regeneration man is wholly passive; in conversion, he is active. The first reviving us is wholly the act of God, without any concurrence of the creature; but after we are revived we do actively and voluntarily live in his sight. Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature; conversion is the motion of the creature to God, by virtue of that first principle; from this principle all the acts of believing, repenting, mortifying, quickening, do spring. In all these a man is active; in the other he is merely passive."—(See Buck's Theo. Dict., under *Conversion*)

In the works of Thomas Scott, vol. 4, "Saving Faith," part 2, sec. 2, we have these words:—"The first effect of the Lord's special love to those who are dead in sin and slaves to divers lusts, consists in quickening and regenerating them; and they are regenerated that they may be justified, by being made capable of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ." "We are passive in receiving divine life, though it may be communicated while we are using the appointed means, or bestowing much diligence from natural principles; but we are active in turning to the Lord by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The former is regeneration, the latter conversion." "Regeneration precedes both faith and conversion."

Many more quotations from the most reputable Calvinistic authorities might be added, but we think that the above are sufficient to show that we are not misrepresenting the Calvinistic view, in the presentation above given. In the refutation of this theory of regeneration, we quote from Dr. Fisk as follows:—

"The notion that the mind is entirely passive in this change, that is,

that nothing is done by the subject of it which is preparative or conditional, or in any way coöperative in its accomplishment, has been a prevailing sentiment in the various modifications of the old Calvinistic school. It is not indeed pretended that the mind is inactive either before or at the time this renovation is effected by the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it is said that the sinner is resisting with all the power of the mind, and with all the obstinacy of the most inveterate enmity, up to the very moment and in the very act of regeneration.* So that the sinner is regenerated not only without his coöperation, but also in spite of his utmost resistance. Hence it is maintained that, but for the irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost upon the heart, no sinner would be regenerated.

“1. One of the leading objections to this view is that it is inseparably connected with the doctrine of particular and unconditional election. The two reciprocally imply each other, and must therefore stand or fall together. But this doctrine of particular and unconditional election has been sufficiently refuted, it is hoped; if so, then the doctrine of passivity and irresistible grace is not true.

“2. Another very serious difficulty which this theory of (regeneration) has to contend with is, that the Scriptures, in numerous passages, declare that the Spirit of God may be resisted, grieved, quenched, and utterly disregarded; and that the grace of God may be abused, or received in vain. The passages to establish these propositions are so frequent that I need not stop to point them out. But if this be so, then the grace of God and the Spirit of grace are not irresistible.

“3. It may be yet further objected to this doctrine of the mind's passivity in (regeneration,) that it is a virtual denial of all gracious influence upon the heart before regeneration. It has been shown that man is not able to comply with the conditions of salvation without grace, and that the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit are given to every sinner previous to regeneration. But there would be no necessity for this, and no consistency in it, if there are no conditions and no coöperation on the part of the sinner in the process of the new birth. Hence the advocates of this doctrine very consistently maintain that the first act of grace upon the heart of the sinner is that which regenerates him. Since then this theory conflicts with the Bible doctrine of a gracious influence anterior to regeneration, it cannot be admitted.

“4. This theory of regeneration removes all conditions on the part of the sinner to the removal of the power and guilt of sin. It teaches

* As Dr. Fisk uses “*conversion*” as synonymous with *regeneration*, we have generally substituted *regeneration*, as a term more definite, and less liable to be misunderstood. The doctor's remarks only apply to *conversion* in the sense of *regeneration*.

that if the sinner should do anything acceptable to God, as a condition to his regeneration, it would imply he did not need regenerating; that such an idea, in fact, would be inconsistent with the doctrine of depravity, and irreconcilable with the idea of salvation by grace. And this is the ground on which the old Calvinists have so repeatedly charged us with the denial of the doctrines of grace, and with holding that we may be justified by our works. There is something very singular in these notions respecting the necessity of unconditional regeneration in order that it may be by grace. These same Calvinists tell us that the sinner can repent, and ought to repent, and that the Scriptures require it at his hand. What! is the sinner able and obliged to do that which would destroy the whole economy of grace, which would blot out the gospel, and nullify the atonement itself? Ought he to do that which would prove him a practical Pelagian and an operative workmonger? Is he, indeed, according to Calvinists themselves, required in Scripture to do that which would prove Calvinism false, and a conditional regeneration true? So it would seem. Put together these two dogmas of Calvinism—1. The sinner is able and ought to repent. 2. The idea that the sinner does anything toward his regeneration destroys the doctrine of depravity and of salvation by grace. I say, put these two together, and you have almost all the contradictions of Calvinism converged to a focus—and, what is most fatal to the system, you have the authority of Calvinism itself to prove that every intelligent probationer on the earth not only has the ability, but is authoritatively required, to give practical demonstration that the system is false!! What is this but to say, ‘You can, and you cannot;’—if you do not, you will be justly condemned—if you do, you will ruin the gospel system, and yourself with it? When such glaring paradoxes appear, there must be something materially wrong in at least some parts of the system.

“5. But the inconsistency is not its only, and certainly not its most injurious, characteristic. In the same proportion as men are made to believe that there are no conditions on their part to their regeneration, they will be likely to fall into one of the two extremes of carelessness or despair; either of which, persisted in, would be ruinous. I cannot doubt but that, in this way, tens of thousands have been ruined. We should infer that such would be the result of the doctrine from only understanding its character; and I am fully satisfied, that, in my own personal acquaintance, I have met with hundreds who have been lulled in the cradle of Antinomianism on the one hand, or paralyzed with despair on the other, by this same doctrine of passive, unconditional regeneration. Calvinists, it is true, tell us this is the abuse of the doctrine; but it appears to me to be the legitimate fruit. What else could we

expect? A man might as well attempt to dethrone the Mediator as to do anything toward his own regeneration. Teach this, and carelessness ensues; Antinomian feelings will follow;—or if you arouse the mind by the curse of the law, and by the fearful doom that awaits the unregenerate, what can he do? Nothing! Hell rises from beneath to meet him, but he can do *nothing*. He looks until he is excited to phrenzy, from which he very probably passes over to raving madness, or settles down into a state of gloomy despair.

“6. Another very decisive objection to this doctrine is the frequent, and I may say uniform, language of Scripture. The Scriptures require us to seek, ask, knock, come to Christ, look unto God, repent, believe, open the door of the heart, receive Christ, &c. No one can fail to notice how these instructions are sprinkled over the whole volume of revelation. And, what is specially in point here, all these are spoken of, and urged upon us, as conditions of blessings that shall follow,—even the blessings of salvation, of regeneration,—and as conditions too, without which we cannot expect these blessings. Take one passage of many:—‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.’ If any one doubts whether ‘becoming the sons of God,’ as expressed in this text, means regeneration, the next verse will settle it. ‘Which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’—John i. 12, 13. The latter verse I may have occasion to remark upon hereafter; it is quoted here to show that the new birth is undoubtedly the subject here spoken of. And we are here expressly taught, in language that will bear no other interpretation, that receiving Christ and believing on his name are the conditions of regeneration. If there were no other passage in the Bible to direct our minds on this subject, this plain, unequivocal text ought to be decisive. But the truth is, this is the uniform language of Scripture. And are there any passages against these? any that say we cannot come, cannot believe, seek, &c.? or any that say this work of personal regeneration is performed independent of conditions? I know of none which will not fairly admit of a different construction. We are often met with this passage:—‘It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.’ See Rom. ix. 16. But whoever interpreteth this of personal and individual regeneration, can hardly have examined the passage carefully and candidly. But we are told, again, it is God that renews the heart; and if it is his work, it is not the work of the sinner. I grant this; this is the very sentiment I mean to maintain; but then there may be conditions,—there are conditions,—or else we should not hear the psalmist *praying* for this, in language that

has been preserved for the edification of all subsequent generations, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' This is a practical comment on Christ's conditional salvation, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Since, then, this doctrine of passive unconditional regeneration implies unconditional election — since it is in opposition to those Scriptures which teach that the Spirit and grace of God may be resisted and received in vain — since it is a virtual denial of all gracious influences upon the heart before regeneration — since it leads the abettors of the theory into gross contradictions by their endeavors to reconcile the *can* and the *cannot* of their system — since its practical tendency is to make sinners careless, or drive them to despair — and, finally, since it contradicts that numerous class of Scriptures, some of which are very unequivocal, that predicate the blessings of regeneration and justification upon certain preparatory and conditional acts of the sinner — therefore, we conclude that this theory cannot be true." — ("Calvinistic Controversy.")

2. The second theory of regeneration is that which rejects from this work all direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and attributes the entire change to a mere intellectual process, by which the truth of the gospel is accredited, and an external obedience rendered to the rite of baptism. As the advocates of some modification of this theory, we may set down Socinians, Arians, Unitarians, some of the new school Presbyterians of the United States, and the Rationalists of Germany. These several parties have differed considerably among themselves on this subject. Some have confined the work of regeneration entirely to the mental operation, and taught that the new birth means only the change of the mind and disposition of the soul produced by the force of truth, according to the principles of *moral suasion*; others have contended that an individual cannot be regenerated till submission to the rite of baptism is added to the mental operation above specified. But they have all agreed in rejecting the direct operation of the Spirit from any agency in this work.

(1.) *The first leading objection to this theory is, that it is unphilosophical.* It involves what seems to be irreconcilable with the nature of things. To avoid misapprehension, and cut off a common method of evasion, we would here remark, that the advocates of this theory have been far from admitting that they reject the operation of the Spirit, in the accomplishment of this great work. Indeed, they have represented it as exceedingly unjust; — as gross misrepresentation, and intolerant persecution, that they should be so charged. But all this brandishing about the operations of the Spirit — persecution, &c., is nothing but a ruse, by which to evade the subject. When they are charged with

denying the "operations of the Spirit," a definite and commonly understood meaning is attached to that phrase. Hence, to frame a different meaning for it, and then to raise the cry of misrepresentation and persecution, because they are charged with rejecting a doctrine which they admit, is nothing but an evasion of the subject. When they acknowledge the operations of the Spirit, they mean, by that phrase, something entirely different from what it implies when they are charged with denying it. Therefore, it is evident that if the thing which they are charged with denying is not the same thing which they acknowledge, they have not met, but merely evaded, the charge.

By the "operations of the Spirit," the advocates for this theory merely mean that the sacred penmen were inspired by the Spirit to write the Scriptures, and endued with the power of working miracles for their confirmation; and that this word, thus originally inspired and confirmed, now operates on the minds of men so as to produce regeneration, without any further influence of the Spirit than what is thus indirectly exerted through the written word. Yet they contend, that because the Spirit originally inspired the word, all the influence of the word results from that original operation of the Spirit. Whereas, the opposers of this theory, by the operation of the Spirit in regeneration, mean a direct exertion of influence by the Spirit on the heart of the sinner.

To render these two different views more clearly distinct, we may use a figure of illustration. Thus, the Divine influence, which the advocates of this theory admit, resembles the influence of the skill and ingenuity of an artist, when he forms a complicated piece of machinery, such, for instance, as a clock or a watch. The well arranged parts of the machinery may continue to perform the office assigned them, and the hour may be correctly described by the timepiece, even for years after it has passed from the hand of the artist. Thus, while the clock or the watch continues to run, we still, in an indirect sense, attribute its operation to the skill of the workman. Though he may be thousands of miles distant, or even slumbering in his grave, we may still say, that his skill and ingenuity are operating through the machinery that he formed. Just in the same sense, the theory of regeneration now in question allows the influence of the Spirit of God. They admit that God by his Spirit established the gospel, inspired the word, arranged the system, and set the machine to work; but contend that no further direct energy is needed. The Spirit, say they, operates through the word like the skill of the man through the watch, and the immediate influence of the Spirit is no more essential to the regeneration of the soul, than the immediate presence and influence of the artist is indispensable to the operations of the machinery.

On the other hand, the opposers of this theory would illustrate their view of Divine influence in regeneration by the figure of "a sword," which is a passive instrument, only moving as it is moved. Thus, it is contended, that, as the sword can only become the instrument of death in the hand of the warrior by whom it is wielded, so the word of God can only be the instrument of regeneration in the hand, and by the direct energy, of the Holy Spirit. According to this view, there is a direct and real operation of the Spirit; but according to the former notion, there is no Divine power exerted at the time;—no real influence of the Spirit at all; but merely a secondary, figurative, or indirect influence.

From what has been said, we think it will readily appear, *that the theory under consideration is unphilosophical, and repugnant to the nature of things.* It implies an effect without an adequate cause. Man is a being embracing, in his complex character, physical, intellectual, and moral powers. These powers, though intimately connected, are really distinct in their nature. And a power of a correspondently different nature is required to effect a change in them. To effect a physical change, a physical influence is requisite; to effect an intellectual change, an intellectual process is requisite; and to effect a moral change, moral power is required. Now, to show that it is impossible, in the very nature of things, for regeneration to be effected by mere intellectual or physical influence, it is only necessary to reflect on the real nature of the change which regeneration implies. What kind of a change is it? It is not physical; no new faculties are imparted to the body. The feeble constitution is not rendered robust, nor the literally lame, or halt, or blind, restored to soundness. Were it a change of this kind, there would be some philosophy in resorting to physical operations, or applying physical influences. Nor is it an intellectual change. No new faculties of mind are imparted. The unlettered man is not thereby rendered an adept in science, nor the man of naturally feeble intellect exalted to an equality in mental power with Locke or Bacon. Were it a change of this kind, there would be some philosophy in resorting to intellectual operations. But what should we say of the scribe who would direct the sinner to engage in the study of Euclid in order to effect the regeneration of his soul? And yet if this change only implied the improvement of the intellectual faculties, such would be a rational course. The change in question is neither physical nor intellectual. We would not say that it has no connection with the body or the intellect. We are required to attend upon the means of grace, to read or hear the word, and to endeavor to understand the truths of the gospel. But all these constitute no part of, nor do they, to any degree, necessarily result in, regeneration. The change is of a nature radically different. It is not

physical, nor yet intellectual, either in whole or in part ; but it is solely moral or spiritual. To produce this, there must be an adequate cause. Physical and intellectual causes, we have seen, are inadequate. What, then, we ask, is the power adequate to the performance of the work ? We answer, that, as body can operate on body, and mind on mind, so spirit can operate on spirit. He who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh," alone is able to form the soul anew—to change the moral character—to "take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh."

I know that it is attempted to evade the argument for Divine influence as founded on the nature of things, by saying, "that, although none but God can regenerate the soul, yet he effects this work by the agency of instituted means, without any direct Divine influence at the time." And the operations of nature are appealed to as illustration and proof. This manœuvre of the advocates of the theory of self-conversion, and water regeneration, divulges the foundation of their entire theory. It is founded upon a false and infidel view of the nature of Divine providence. Indeed, the denial of a particular providence, and the rejection of Divine influence in regeneration, are necessary parts of the same system. But let us for a moment contemplate the subject. Are we to suppose, that, because God may operate through the instrumentality of second causes, therefore he does not operate at all ? Are we to suppose that when he formed the material universe he impressed upon matter self-controlling energy—that he endued the earth, the sea, and all things else, with inherent power of self-government ; and that the Deity, except in cases of miracle, has had no more direct agency in the things of the world since creation's birth, than if there were no God in existence ? Really, it seems that this is implied in the scheme before us. It is nothing better than a modest method to put God out of the world ; it leads directly to Atheism. As a refutation of the whole scheme, we would ask, what are the laws of nature, but the method by which God controls the world ? And what the power of attraction, the process of vegetation, or any of the operations of nature around us, but the immediate energy of God ? Let but the Divine energy be withheld, and vain would be the labor of the husbandman ; the rays of the sun, the fruitfulness of the soil, nor the "showers that water the earth," could ever produce a single spire of grass. Just so the means of grace,—the reading and hearing of the word,—the intellectual study of the evidences of Christianity, or the doctrines of the gospel,—and submission to baptism, and every other external rite of the church ;—any of these, or all of them combined, can no more regenerate a soul, without the direct influence of the power of God, than they can create a world. As in nature, so in grace, "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." The great

change in the human soul, by which it is "created anew in Christ Jesus," is a work which God has delegated to no ordinance or means of grace; to no minister, nor angel; but reserved to himself alone. Therefore, we conclude that the theory of regeneration in question is unphilosophical, and irreconcilable with the nature of things.

(2.) A second objection to this theory of regeneration is, *that it is at war with the doctrine of man's native and total depravity*. Indeed, few have ever advocated it, but such as have denied total depravity. And in this respect, though inconsistent with Scripture, they have been consistent with themselves. For if man, by the mere exercise of his native mental powers, and submission to baptism, can effect the regeneration of his soul, then he cannot be so totally depraved and helpless as to be able to do nothing toward his salvation without the aid of Divine influence. We think it must be obvious that the doctrine of regeneration without Divine influence directly exerted cannot stand with the doctrine of total depravity; and, as the latter has been sufficiently proved in former lectures, we add nothing on that point here.

(3.) A third objection to this theory is, *that it conflicts with those Scriptures which make it our duty to pray to God for regeneration and its concomitant blessings*. That such is the Scripture requirement, we think can scarcely be denied. The command is, seek! ask! knock! The Holy Spirit is promised to them that "ask;" and St. Paul declares, "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Hence, in praying for the Spirit of God, or for the pardon of sins, we are praying for regeneration; these blessings involve each other. But, we ask, on the supposition that God has nothing to do, directly, with regeneration, how can we consistently implore his aid? Will we call on God to do for us what he has made it our duty and privilege to do for ourselves? Or will we beseech him to do what we believe would be contrary to the gospel? According to this theory, for a sinner to be petitioning the throne of God for "a new heart," the "remission of sins," or the blessing of "salvation," would render it suitable for the Almighty to rebuke him, by saying, "Why call upon me on this subject? Have I not given you the power to effect this work without my aid? Go, read the Bible, believe the evidence there, and be baptized, and you may thus regenerate your own souls, by merely exercising your native powers. You have the Scriptures, and you have your native faculties; these are all sufficient; but if they were not, the age of miracles is past, and I exert no direct influence on the hearts of men; and why, therefore, will you waste your time in prayer?" Such a view of the subject seems more congenial to infidelity than religion; but, we confess, to our mind, it appears perfectly consistent with the theory before us. Would a man

act consistently to pray to God for the Scriptures, while he has them already in possession? Surely not; and why? Simply because God has already conferred the blessing. No more could he, according to this theory, ask God for the regeneration of his soul; for, so far as the exertion of the Divine influence is concerned, that work is already as completely accomplished as it ever will be. God will do nothing more.

(1.) This theory of regeneration by the mere exercise of our native powers *contradicts those Scriptures that attribute this work directly to God*. These passages are numerous and explicit. It is said, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 12, 13. Here "the power to become the sons of God," or being "born," is not represented to be by mental or physical influence;—it is attributed directly to "God." Again; the very terms by which this change is uniformly expressed, if it be not effected by a direct influence of God, are calculated to mislead. It is called a "creation," a "translation," "renewal," and it is repeatedly expressed by the phrase "born of God." We therefore conclude, that, as this theory is unphilosophical, or irreconcilable with the nature of things,—as it is at war with the doctrine of total depravity,—as it conflicts with the Scripture presentation of the duty of prayer,—and as it contradicts all those passages which attribute this work directly to God,—it cannot be true. The two theories which we have considered err on opposite extremes;—the former, by attributing the work to God, irrespective of the agency of man; the latter, by attributing it entirely to man, independent of Divine influence.

3. The third theory of regeneration contains what we believe to be the Scripture view of the subject. It is embraced, as before said, in these two propositions:

(1.) *It is a work performed by the direct and efficient operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart.*

(2.) *The Holy Spirit exerts this regenerating power only on conditions required of man.*

The first position, we think, needs no additional proof. On the last we will observe:

(1.) It cannot be maintained that the *prima facie* evidence of Scripture is opposed to conditional regeneration. To quote all the passages which unequivocally teach this idea, would be to transcribe much of the sacred volume. Let it suffice that we notice the principal objection to this doctrine. *It is said by Calvinists to conflict with the Scripture view of human depravity and salvation by grace.* In reply to this objection, we

would say, 1. It might be inconsistent with the doctrine of human depravity if it were contended that the sinner performs these conditions of himself, independent of Divine grace; but such is not the fact. It is "God that worketh in us," that we may have the ability to comply with the conditions prescribed: of ourselves we can do nothing. God imparts the grace, which we are required to improve; and when the condition is performed, the promise is sure. As to the second branch of the objection, we remark, that the conditions of regeneration cannot destroy the idea of grace, unless those conditions are considered meritorious. Grace or favor does not cease to be such because it is conferred according to a certain plan. The conditions of salvation do not change the nature of the blessing bestowed; they only describe the method of bestowment. From all that has been said, we conclude, that regeneration is neither a work of God without the agency of man, nor a work of man without the influence of God, but a work of God performed on conditions required of man.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXVI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Is regeneration intimately connected with other leading doctrines?</p> <p>2. In what places does the term occur in Scripture?</p> <p>3. What is its literal import?</p> <p>4. How is it to be understood in Matthew?</p> <p>5. How in Titus?</p> <p>6. By what other terms is regeneration expressed in Scripture?</p> <p>7. Does regeneration consist in a historical and theoretical belief of the truth?</p> <p>8. Does it consist in mere morality?</p> <p>9. Does it consist in a mere external profession, and observance of the ordinances and external duties of religion?</p> <p>10. Does it imply new faculties of body or soul?</p> <p>11. How, then, may it be defined?</p> <p>12. By what texts is this definition sustained?</p> <p>13. How is regeneration distinguished from justification and adoption?</p> <p>14. Are these blessings simultaneous?</p> <p>15. What three leading theories, on the attainment of regeneration, have been advanced?</p> <p>16. By what quotations is the theory of passive regeneration shown to be Calvinistic?</p> <p>17. Is this theory inseparably connected with particular and unconditional election?</p> <p>18. What is the second argument against this theory?</p> | <p>19. The third?</p> <p>20. The fourth?</p> <p>21. The fifth?</p> <p>22. The sixth?</p> <p>23. Who have been the advocates of the second theory?</p> <p>24. Have they been agreed among themselves?</p> <p>25. How is this theory shown to be unphilosophical?</p> <p>26. In what two different senses is the influence of the spirit understood?</p> <p>27. How is the argument for Divine influence, founded on the nature of things, attempted to be evaded?</p> <p>28. How is the evasion met?</p> <p>29. How is this theory shown to be inconsistent with total depravity?</p> <p>30. How does it conflict with the duty of prayer?</p> <p>31. Wherein is it contrary to those Scriptures which attribute this change directly to God?</p> <p>32. What are some of those Scriptures?</p> <p>33. In what two propositions is the Scripture theory contained?</p> <p>34. What is the principal Calvinistic objection to this theory?</p> <p>35. How is the <i>first</i> branch of the objection answered?</p> <p>36. How is the <i>second</i> answered?</p> <p>37. What is the grand concluding proposition?</p> |
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LECTURE XXVII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE doctrine of DIVINE INFLUENCE is clearly revealed in the sacred Scriptures, and stands connected with every dispensation and every leading topic of religion. Against this great Bible truth infidelity has hurled her keenest shafts of ridicule, and manifested a most irreconcilable enmity. It is a subject on which there has been a diversity of sentiment among the confessedly orthodox, while pseudo-Christians have exercised their ingenuity to explain it away. Yet we think it will appear, in the sequel, that a renunciation of this doctrine is a renunciation of all vital religion, and that any modification or abatement of its full scriptural import is a proportionate surrender of the essentials of godliness. The importance of this doctrine, considered in its connection with the scheme of human salvation, as well as the great extent of controversy which it has elicited in almost every age of the church, should deeply impress our minds with the necessity of the most implicit and devout reliance on the teachings of inspiration, that we may, upon this radical doctrine, be delivered from all dangerous error, and guided into the knowledge of all essential truth. The influence of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine so repeatedly and explicitly recognized in the Bible, that a formal renunciation of it would amount to a rejection of revelation. Hence, all who have acknowledged the truth of the Scriptures have admitted, under some modification, the doctrine now proposed for discussion. But when the subject is closely scrutinized, and critical inquiry made concerning what is understood by the influence of the Spirit, it is manifest that the phrase is far from being of the same import in the lips of all who use it. Hence, it is very important that we inquire carefully concerning the sense in which this doctrine is presented in Scripture.

I. *The Scriptures were inspired and confirmed by the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit.*

On this point, we refer to the following passages of the holy word. 2 Pet. i. 21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" Acts xxviii. 25. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." Acts i. 16. "This Scripture must needs

have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas." So far as the inspiration of the prophets is concerned, the above texts are conclusive. In reference to the inspiration of the apostles, the following passages may be consulted: Matt. x. 19, 20. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; *for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* For it is not ye that speak, *but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*" John xiv. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12, 13. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which *the Holy Ghost teacheth*; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." From the foregoing passages, it is evident that the apostles were immediately inspired, by the Holy Ghost, to make known the truths of the gospel as recorded in the New Testament. To qualify them for the great work assigned them, of publishing, and confirming by "signs and wonders and divers miracles," the truths of the gospel, they were supernaturally endued with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Thus commissioned and prepared, they went forth, and spoke, "as the Spirit gave them utterance," the wonderful things of God, and were enabled to heal the sick, raise the dead, and perform many notable miracles, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

II. *The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit operates on the minds and hearts of men, in convicting, regenerating, and converting the sinner, and in comforting, guiding, and sanctifying the Christian.*

Perhaps all professed Christians will admit the truth of this proposition; but all do not construe it in the same way. Therefore, much care is requisite that we may perceive clearly the sense in which this subject is understood by different persons.

1. The first theory that we shall notice upon this subject is that which *denies the personality of the Holy Spirit altogether, and explains the phrase to imply nothing but the manifestation of a Divine attribute.*

The abettors of this theory reject the doctrine of the Trinity; and when they speak of the Holy Spirit, they do not mean a personal intelligence, but merely the manifestation or exercise of some of the Divine attributes. Thus, by the indwelling of the Spirit in the heart of the Christian, they mean no more than this: that a disposition or quality

somewhat resembling the Divine attributes exists in the heart of the believer. Their view may be fairly illustrated by reference to a common figure of speech, by which, when an individual is possessed in an eminent degree of any quality for which another has been peculiarly celebrated, he is not only said to resemble him, but to possess his spirit. Thus, the brave are said to possess the spirit of Cæsar; the cruel, the spirit of Herod or of Nero; while the patient, faithful, affectionate, or zealous Christian is said to possess the spirit of Job, of Abraham, of John, or of Paul. In the same sense, say the advocates of this theory, he who is meek, humble, harmless, compassionate, and benevolent, is said to possess "*the spirit of Christ*;" that is, he possesses qualities resembling those which shone so illustriously in the character of our Lord. So, when the Spirit of God is said to "dwell in the hearts" of Christians, it is merely to be understood that they partake, to a limited extent, of that disposition of love, goodness, holiness, &c., which, in infinite perfection, belongs to the Divine character. Or, when the Christian is said to be influenced, operated upon, or "led by the Spirit of God," we are taught that he is merely actuated, in a limited degree, by those principles of righteousness and holiness which pertain to the perfections of the Godhead. In reference to this theory, we remark, that it appears to us to be nothing better than infidelity in disguise. While it acknowledges in words the doctrine of Divine influence, it in reality denies it; and while it professedly bows to the majesty of inspiration, it in reality contradicts or perverts the plainest declarations of the Bible. So far from this theory acknowledging the real influence of the Holy Spirit, it denies his real existence; and would represent all that is said of the important offices, influences, and personal acts of the Holy Ghost,—all that is said of his dwelling in the Father and in the Son,—of his proceeding from them,—of his abiding with, instructing, comforting, leading, and sanctifying the Christian, as mere rhetorical figures, by which actions, never really performed, are attributed to a being having only an imaginary existence. As this theory is based upon the denial of the personality of the Holy Ghost, and as that notion has, we trust, been clearly refuted in a former lecture, we think it needless to detain upon this point. Suffice it to say, that, when a person is now said to be moved by the spirit of Nero, it is not implied that the ghost of that departed tyrant has literally entered the heart of the man, and exercises a real agency in instigating his cruel actions; when John the Baptist was said to have come in the "spirit and power of Elijah," we do not understand that there was a literal transmigration of spirit from the one to the other; it is most palpable that no real influence of the spirit of Nero or of Elijah is supposed in the above cases. And hence, according to this theory,

the real influence of the Holy Spirit is positively discarded. And if the existence of the agent and his influence are both imaginary, it necessarily follows that the effect attributed to that influence, in convicting, regenerating, comforting, and sanctifying the soul, must also be imaginary. Thus it appears that this theory, in explaining away the personality and operations of the Holy Spirit, has really denied the actual existence of the change attributed to that agency, and explained experimental and practical godliness out of the world!!

2. A second theory upon this subject is that which contends that *all the influence of the Holy Spirit, since the age of miracles, is mediate and indirect through the written word.* This and the view above presented are properly modifications of the same theory. The only distinction in the sentiments of the advocates of these theories is, that some deny, while others admit, the personality of the Holy Spirit; but they all agree in rejecting any direct Divine influence on the hearts of men, and in confining the operation of the Spirit to the medium of the written word. We think nothing is needed, but a clear conception of the nature of this theory, in order to see that it amounts to a real denial of all Divine influence, in the proper sense of the term. We will endeavor to ascertain the real import of this theory. There is some ambiguity in the term medium, when it is said that "the Spirit operates through the medium of the written word." A medium may either be instrumental and passive, or efficient and active. In the former case, that which operates through the medium is a real agent, and performs a real operation; in the latter case, that which operates through the medium is no agent in the case, and performs no real operation, but is only said to operate, by a figure of speech. For an illustration of these two acceptations of the term medium, we would suppose a soldier to slay his enemy with his sword, and then to command his servant, and he buries the dead man. In this case, there are two different acts which may be properly attributed to the soldier,—the slaying of the enemy, and his burial; each act is performed through a different medium;—the sword is the medium through which the man is slain, but the servant is the medium through which he is buried. In the case of the sword, the medium is merely instrumental and passive; it only moves as it is wielded by the hand of the soldier, who is the real agent, and performs the real operation. In the case of the servant, the medium is an efficient and active one; it moves and acts of itself, independent of any direct assistance from the soldier; and although, in an accommodated or figurative sense, the burial of the man may be attributed to the soldier, it is obvious that the real agent is the servant; and the operation of burial is,

properly, not performed by the soldier, but by his servant. Now, if it be understood that the "written word" is the medium through which the Holy Spirit operates, in the same sense in which the sword is the medium through which the soldier operates to the destruction of his foe, it is clear that there must be a *real* operation or exercise of the Divine influence at the time. And such is, unquestionably, the scriptural view; but it is not the sense in which the abettors of this theory understand the subject. They admit no direct exertion of the Divine influence at the time. They understand *the word* to be an efficient and active medium, acting as an agent in producing conviction, conversion, sanctification, &c., without any immediate exercise of Divine influence at the time. The sense in which they understand the subject may also be illustrated by reference to the influence of uninspired writings;—such, for instance, as the writings of Baxter, or of Fletcher, which still exert an influence on the minds of thousands who read them, long after the authors are silent in death. Here, in an accommodated sense, Baxter and Fletcher are still said to be operating through their writings on the minds of men; but is it not clear that all the real operation performed by them ceased when they "ceased at once to live and move?" They put forth no direct energy at any subsequent time. Just so, the advocates of this theory tell us that the Spirit of God inspired the Scriptures,—wrought miracles for the establishment of the gospel; but that the direct influence of the Holy Ghost then ceased; and that the Spirit only operates through the word in the same sense in which the spirit of Baxter operates through the volume entitled, "The Saint's Rest." Now, we think it must be clear that this is no real operation of the Holy Spirit at all. It is only understood in such sense as that in which a master workman may be said to be the builder of a house, which was reared by his under-workmen, when he, perhaps, was hundreds of miles distant from the spot; or in such sense as an uninspired author, long since dead, may be said to operate through his writings, which he produced while living; or as the ingenious artist may be said to operate through the machinery which he formed, while it may continue to move after it has passed from his hand. In such, and only such sense as this, we are told, the Spirit of God now operates on the minds and hearts of men. Against this theory we enter our solemn protest.

3. The third theory upon this subject is that which we believe to be the true scriptural view of the doctrine. It admits the indirect influence of the Spirit through the "written word," as contended for in the scheme above explained; and *maintains that there is likewise a direct and immediate Divine influence, not only accompanying the written*

word, but also operating through the Divine providence and all the various means of grace.

That the real point of controversy on this subject may be clearly seen, we would remark, —

1. That the advocates of this last theory freely admit that the Holy Spirit does operate on the minds and hearts of men through the medium of the written word ; — they do not deny that the arguments and motives of the gospel are designed as means or instrumentalities leading to salvation.

2. It is admitted, further, that the direct influence of the Spirit contended for is not designed to reveal new truths, but merely to arouse, quicken, or renew the unregenerate heart ; or to impress, apply, or give efficiency to truths already revealed, and thus to exert an efficient agency in the great work of convicting, regenerating, and converting sinners, and illuminating, comforting, and sanctifying believers.

3. It is admitted, also, that the word of truth is the ordinary instrumentality by which the Spirit operates on those to whom the gospel is addressed.

Therefore the real point of dispute is, whether there is any direct influence of the Spirit distinct from the indirect or mediate influence, through the truths, arguments, and motives of the gospel.

That there is a direct influence of the Spirit, as contended for by the advocates of this theory, we will now proceed to show.

1. The Scriptures in numerous places speak of a Divine influence being exercised over the minds of persons, which, from the circumstances of the case, must have been distinct from arguments and motives presented in words to the eye or the ear. Prov. xxi. 1. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord : as the rivers of water, *he turneth it whithersoever he will.*” Ezra vi. 22. “For the Lord had made them joyful, and *turned the heart* of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.” In these passages the Lord is represented as operating on the hearts of kings, when, according to the context, the influence must have been direct and distinct from written or spoken language.

Luke xxiv. 45. “Then *opened he their understanding*, that they *might understand* the Scriptures.” Acts xvi. 14. “Whose *heart the Lord opened*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” Here, the *understanding* and the *heart* are said to be *opened* by the Lord, — not *by the Scriptures*, but that they “might understand the Scriptures,” and “attend unto the things which were spoken.” Consequently, there must have been a Divine influence, distinct from the mere word uttered or heard.

2. Prayer is presented in Scripture as efficacious in securing the influence of the Spirit. Ps. cxix. 18. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Ps. li. 10. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Rom. x. 1. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." From these Scriptures it is clear that both the prophet and the apostle offered prayer to God as though they expected a direct answer to their petitions. Now, upon the supposition that there is no influence of the Holy Spirit except through the word, it is wholly inconceivable how prayer can be of any avail in securing the blessings desired. Again; in Luke xi. 13, we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Here is a general promise, restricted to no class of persons or age of the world. Upon the hypothesis that there is no direct influence of the Spirit, how can such language be consistently understood? Are we to expect the written word to be bestowed in answer to prayer? No one, surely, can so understand this promise; and yet, if we deny the direct influence of the Spirit, how else can it be interpreted?

3. Again; if the Spirit of God operates only through the word, all idiots, infants, and Pagans, who die without hearing that word, must perish everlastingly. We proved in a former lecture that all mankind are by nature totally depraved, and that a radical change of heart is essential to their admission into heaven. If, then, this change can only be effected through the medium of the word or truth of God, those who are incapable of hearing that word never can realize the change, and consequently must be doomed to inevitable destruction. From this consequence of the doctrine we oppose, there is no possible escape.

We would now notice some objections which have been urged against the direct influence of the Spirit for which we have contended.

1. It has been argued that, from the constitution of the human mind, it is impossible that it can be influenced except by words, arguments, or motives, which can only be communicated in language addressed to the eye or the ear.

To this objection we reply, that the premises here assumed are not true. It cannot be proved that there is such a constitution of our nature. Indeed, it is most evident that there can be no such thing. Is the power of the Holy One thus to be limited by us, where he himself has placed no limit? As man was originally created holy, independent of arguments or motives addressed to his understanding, why should we suppose it impossible that the same Almighty Power should "create him anew," and restore him to his pristine purity, by a similar direct

energy? Again; it is admitted that Satan can tempt, seduce, and influence the minds of men to evil, in a thousand different ways. I ask, has the Prince of darkness a Bible;—has he a written revelation, by which, through the eye or the ear, he addresses the human race? Or is it so that he possesses greater power over man than God himself? Can Satan reach the human mind, so as to instil his deadly poison, and exert his soul-destroying influence, separate and distinct from a direct revelation, but must God himself be restricted to words, arguments, or motives? The position is too monstrous to be entertained.

2. It is objected that if God can, and does, operate on the minds of men separate and distinct from his word, then his word is rendered useless. To this we reply, that the objection is good for nothing, because the conclusion does not follow from the premises. It is what logicians call a *non sequitur*. The word of God is the ordinary instrument with those to whom it is addressed; but the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent by whom the instrument is wielded. Now, is it logical to argue that because the instrument cannot accomplish the appropriate work of the agent, therefore, it can be of no use in reference to the work for which it is assigned. As well might we argue that because the hand cannot perform the office of the eye, it is therefore useless, and should be cast away. Because God can work, and, where means are not appropriate, does work without means, shall we, therefore, conclude that he shall be precluded from the use of means in all cases?

3. It is objected that regeneration, conversion, &c., are said in Scripture to be through, or by, the word of truth. To this we reply, that they are in no place said to be through or by the word alone. That the word is the ordinary instrumental cause, with those to whom the gospel is addressed, is admitted; but it is in no case the efficient cause of either regeneration or sanctification. “It is the Spirit which quickeneth.” We “must be born of the Spirit.” And it is “through sanctification of the Spirit” that we must be prepared for heaven. When the apostles received their grand commission to “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” it was connected with the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” On this promise they relied in faith, and prayer to God for success.

III. We would now consider more particularly *the direct influence of the Spirit in the conviction and regeneration of sinners*. The Bible clearly teaches that, through the successive ages of the world, the minds of men have been quickened and illuminated by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It has, however, been denied by some, that sinners have a right to pray or look to God for any influence of the Spirit, till they first believe, repent, and submit to baptism. What is quite singular is,

that these same persons who tell us that baptized believers are entitled to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that such only are authorized to pray for the influence of the Spirit, contend also, most strenuously, that there is no Divine influence except that which is mediate, through the written word. Now to us it seems manifestly inconsistent for such as deny the direct influence of the Spirit, to say that "the Holy Spirit dwells in all the faithful," and is only promised to baptized believers, and that for any others to pray for it is unauthorized and preposterous. What! is it so that none but baptized believers can read or hear the word of God? Or is there a veil upon every man's understanding till removed by baptism, which so obscures his intellect and indurates his moral faculties that he can neither perceive the evidence nor feel the force of truth? To contend that the Spirit operates only through the word of truth, and then to speak of an indwelling influence of the Spirit as being restricted to baptized believers, is perfectly puerile. For, if a mediate influence, through the written word, be the only sense in which the operation of the Spirit is to be understood, surely, it is alike accessible to all who read or hear the word, whether baptized or unbaptized. But we think the Scriptures themselves will settle this point.

1. The *direct* influence of the Spirit by PROMISE *extends to sinners*. God, by the mouth of his prophet, (Joel ii. 28,) declares, "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

Here observe, (1.) This influence of the Spirit is promised to sinners; for the terms are of the widest possible import,—"all flesh." Now, to pretend that sinners are not included in that phrase, is not to expound the sacred word, but most unceremoniously to push it aside.

(2.) This influence of the Spirit was intended to convict, and lead to salvation; for the prophet directly adds, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord *shall be delivered*." It will not avail to appeal to the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost, to prove a restriction in the application of the universal phrase, "all flesh." It is true Peter says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;"—but does he say that the prophet spoke in reference to the day of Pentecost alone? Does he say that the words of the prophet were to have no further fulfilment? He makes no such statement. Indeed, we have the most conclusive evidence that he had no such meaning. For, in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, he speaks of the "gift of the Holy Ghost" having been afterward granted to the Gentiles, even as it had been conferred on the Jews; and in the eleventh chapter of the Acts, the apostle says, respecting the Gentiles, "The Holy Ghost fell on them *as on us at the beginning*." Here, then, is positive proof that if the affusion of the Spirit

at Pentecost was a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, so was the effusion of the Spirit on the Gentiles. The argument of the apostle is, that the Gentiles have received the same spiritual blessing; therefore they are entitled to the same church privileges;—the same reasoning would demonstrate, that, as the blessings were similar, if one was a fulfilment of the words of the prophet, so was the other. Hence, we perceive the plea for restricting the application of the prophet's words cannot be sustained. He uses language of universal application; the apostle has not attempted, nor dare we attempt, to limit the application. The words still stand, and will continue to be fulfilled, as long as the gospel shall endure.

As an additional proof that they are intended for universal application, throughout the entire dispensation of the gospel, we remark, that St. Paul quotes, in Rom. 10th chapter, a part of the same prophecy of Joel, and uses it as a stereotyped truth, of universal application,—"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

But suppose us to admit, for the sake of argument, that Joel's prophecy had its entire fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, will it then appear that the influence of the Spirit was not, in that prophecy, promised to sinners? The very reverse will be clearly apparent. To whom was Peter preaching on that occasion? Was it not to a congregation of wicked sinners, whom he directly charges with the crucifixion of the Lord? To this very congregation of sinners, Peter declares, "*The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" What promise is this? Most evidently it is the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, which he had quoted from Joel. This argument cannot be evaded by saying that Peter only promised them the Holy Ghost on the condition of repentance and baptism; for it is admitted that the promise of the Holy Ghost as a Comforter cannot be claimed by the sinner, as such. Yet, that sinners had the promise of the Spirit's influence, even before their repentance, in the prophecy of Joel, we have already proved; and that these very sinners were so affected by the operation of the Spirit as to be convicted of sin, and made to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the context most plainly evinces.

Again; in the 16th chapter of John, our Saviour declares, that, when the Comforter is come, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me," &c. On this passage we remark that our Saviour uses terms of universality;—"the world," without any limitation: and, as if to show that he means especially the world of sinners, he adds, "of sin, because they

believe not on me." Here, then, the unbelieving world has the promise of the Holy Spirit, in his reproving or convicting influences.

2. *The Scriptures furnish instances in which the Spirit has operated directly on the minds of sinners.*

In Gen. vi. 3, we read, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." Connect with this the language of Peter, in the third chapter of his first epistle. "For Christ also hath once suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." Here it appears that for "one hundred and twenty years" the Spirit of God *strove with* that wicked people to lead them to repentance; but, as they resisted its influence, they were swept off by the flood. Christ is said to have "preached" to the antediluvians "by the Spirit." Now, unless we admit that the Spirit directly operated on the minds of that ungodly race, how can these words be interpreted? To say that nothing is meant, but simply the preaching of Noah, is perfectly gratuitous. That Noah was a "preacher of righteousness," and warned the people of the approaching deluge, and that he was inspired to do this by the Holy Spirit, is freely admitted; but here Christ is said to have preached to them, not through Noah, but "by the Spirit." That Noah, while busily employed in the preparation of the ark, preached to every individual of the race then upon earth, cannot be proved, nor is it reasonable to be inferred. But to those "spirits" now "in prison," without exception, "Christ preached by the Spirit." Again: in reference to this, God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" that is, with the *entire race* then existing. Those who can explain these passages by reference merely to the personal ministry of Noah, without admitting the *direct* influence of the Spirit in addition to the mere words and arguments of Noah, may well be considered persons of easy faith. So far from founding their belief on a "Thus saith the Lord," they shape it according to their own fancy, in direct contradiction to the written word.

Again; that the Holy Spirit operated on the minds and hearts of the Jewish nation, through the successive ages of the Mosaic dispensation, is evident from Acts vii. 51. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Here, the first martyr, in his last sermon to his incensed and wicked persecutors, charges them with "resisting the Holy Ghost," which they could not have done had he not first operated upon them.

As an evidence of the wickedness of the Jews of former times, in thus "resisting the Holy Ghost," they are directly charged with having "persecuted and slain the prophets;" showing a malignant and rebellious disposition, such as actuated the betrayers and murderers of our Lord. Now to understand this as only implying that they had resisted the words of the prophets, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost, is not to expound the sacred word, but most presumptuously to shape it according to our own notion. The Jews are charged with "resisting," not the words of the prophets, but "the Holy Ghost." The language, in its plainest import, signifies a direct resistance of the real agency of the Holy Spirit. Before we venture the assertion that the Divine influence in question was only indirect, through the written or spoken word, we should have explicit authority for such a departure from the most obvious sense of the language.

3. That the Holy Spirit operates directly on the hearts of sinners, may be very conclusively argued from the fact that conviction, regeneration, and the entire change of moral character produced by the influence of religion, is in Scripture attributed to the Spirit's agency. The Spirit is said to "convict;" it is declared that we "must be born of the Spirit;" and all the graces constituting the Christian character, such as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," &c., are said to be "the fruit of the Spirit." From all this it is clear, that, as conviction, the new birth, and all the graces of the Christian, are attributed to the influence of the Spirit, there must be an operation of the Spirit on the heart previous to their existence, in order to produce them; and if so, the Spirit must operate on the hearts of sinners.

IV. In the next place we would consider *the witness of the Spirit, as possessed by the Christian.*

The doctrine here stated, while it has ever furnished a theme for sport and ridicule to the infidel world, has been denied by many professing the Christian name, and explained away by others. Yet we think that the following passages will clearly evince that it is taught in Scripture. Rom. viii. 15, 16. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts; crying, Abba, Father." 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath *the witness in himself.*" That the above passages teach that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the adop-

tion of the Christian, is undeniable. But, we inquire, in what sense is that witness to be understood ?

1. Some have contended that it is only the privilege of a " favored few " to know that their sins are forgiven ; and that, consequently, the witness in question can be possessed by none others. To this it is a sufficient reply to say that such view of the subject is perfectly arbitrary. The Scriptures make no such distinction, but speak of this blessing as being alike attainable by all who seek it. It is in reference to all who have been delivered from " the spirit of bondage to fear," and who have " received the spirit of adoption," that the apostle declares that they are permitted to " cry, Abba, Father ;" and have " the Spirit itself " to " bear witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God." Again ; in reference to the Galatians, God is said to have " sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts," not because they are a class of Christians favored above others, but " because they are sons ;"—that is, because they are Christians in the proper sense of the term. And in John, " he that believeth on the Son of God " (not a favored part of such) is said to have " the witness in himself." Hence it appears that to restrict this privilege to a favored few of the people of God, is to treat with great disrespect the plain language of Holy Writ.

2. Others, who have admitted this witness to be the common privilege of believers, have confounded the witness of the Spirit of God with the witness of our own spirit ; and so allowed but *one* witness, while the apostle plainly teaches *two*. " His Spirit beareth witness " not to, but " with our spirit." The " Spirit of God " is one witness, and our own spirit is another. We shall endeavor to show, in the further examination of this subject, that the witness of the Spirit of God is not only distinct from that of our own spirit, but that it is *direct*.

3. That we may come to a full understanding of this subject, we may now remark, that our justification or acceptance with God either can be known by us, or it cannot. To suppose that it cannot, would leave us in a state of remediless doubt and distress, little better than despair itself. Such a position would deprive the Christian of all solid comfort in this life, and be alike contrary to the views of all orthodox divines, and to the word of God itself. If then, as we are bound to conclude, there is a method by which the Christian may, in this life, gain a knowledge of his acceptance with God, we inquire, how is that knowledge obtained ?

Justification, or pardon, is acknowledged to be an act of the Divine mind, by which we are acquitted from the sentence of guilt, and admitted into the Divine favor. If so, it necessarily follows that none but God can *know* that this act has certainly been performed, unless God see proper in some way to give evidence of the fact. No witness can possi-

bly testify beyond the extent of his own knowledge; hence, it is clear that, as none but God can certainly know, except by testimony, that we are justified, so none but He can bear original testimony to the fact. Now, we think it will appear, upon a careful examination, that the indirect testimony of the Spirit amounts substantially to the same as the testimony of our own spirit, and as such must be inadequate to the purpose in hand.

By the witness of our own spirit is generally understood our consciousness of possessing those characteristics described in Scripture as constituting the Christian. This testimony of our own spirit we do not possess by intuition, but it is derived through a process of reasoning. Thus, the Bible describes certain moral qualities of the soul, and moral habits of life, as belonging peculiarly to the children of God. By the exercise of our own consciousness, and a contemplation of our own lives, we may form an opinion concerning our character; then, by the exercise of our reasoning faculty, we may compare our character with the character described in Scripture as pertaining to the child of God, and rationally draw the conclusion that we sustain that relation. This is the only plan by which our own spirit can witness to the fact. Now, to say that this is also the sense in which we are to understand that the Spirit of God witnesses to our adoption, we think is an erroneous view of the subject, as appears from the following considerations:

1. This is evidently, as already stated, to confound the two witnesses, —to make the witness of our own spirit and that of the Spirit of God essentially the same, and really but one witness; whereas, the Scriptures plainly teach that there are two witnesses: —“the Spirit of God,” in the heart of the Christian, “crying, Abba, Father,” and “his own spirit,” uniting in testimony to the same fact.

2. The above view of the subject appears evidently to exhibit the witness of the Spirit in a sense entirely inadequate to the purpose for which, according to the Scriptures, it is designed. The witness of the Spirit is designed to give us an assurance of our adoption, so satisfactory as to amount to real knowledge. Now, as the forgiveness of sin, or adoption into the family of God, is an act of God, it follows that God must be the prime witness of the fact; but to suppose that this witness is only given in the indirect sense, as described, is in effect to discard the witness altogether, so far as the simple question of adoption is concerned. For, if the description of the Christian character given in Scripture by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is all the agency of the Spirit allowed in the witness in question, then it follows that this witness does not testify at all to the adoption of any individual. The Scriptures only testify to the general truth that all who possess a certain moral character

are the children of God ; but, with regard to the question whether this or that individual possesses that character or not, they are silent. As to the simple fact of my adoption, according to the above theory, it is not learned from the testimony of the Spirit, but must be a matter of inference, derived through a process of reasoning. Hence, unless we presuppose the infallibility of our reasoning powers, we may have erred in this intellectual process ; we may have formed an improper view of our own moral character ; we may have misunderstood the Scriptures in reference to the moral character peculiar to the children of God ; or we may have blundered in the comparison of ourselves with the Scripture requirement, and in the conclusion, drawn from such comparison, that we are the children of God. In all or any of these particulars we may have erred ; and if so, it follows that the conclusion arising from this process of ratiocination cannot amount to certain knowledge, but can, at best, be but probable conjecture. Therefore, it is clear, that, as it is the privilege of the Christian to know that he belongs to the family of God, it must be possible for him to have an evidence of the fact superior to the indirect testimony now in question.

Again ; this indirect witness, from its very nature, cannot be possessed by the Christian *at the time he first becomes a child of God* ; for, as it results from a consciousness of having the “fruits of the Spirit,” or of bringing forth those good works which flow from a living faith, time must be allowed for those fruits to grow, and opportunity afforded for those good works to be performed, before they can have an existence ; and to suppose that we have so clear and definite a knowledge of their existence as thereby to infer our sonship previous to their actual existence, is absurd. But all who “are sons,” are said to “have the Spirit of God’s Son in their hearts, crying, Abba, Father ;” hence, this witness must be something more direct and immediate than can result from the inferential reasoning above described.

Again ; these “fruits of the Spirit,” from which we are supposed to infer our adoption, from their very nature cannot precede the knowledge of our acceptance, but must flow from that knowledge. The most important of these fruits are “love, joy, and peace ;” now, these graces and fruits of the Spirit, in the sense in which they are understood, cannot be exercised except by such as have a knowledge of their acceptance with the Lord. “We love him,” saith St. John, “because he first loved us.” But how could his love to us influence our love to him, while we have no evidence of that fact ? And how can we have an evidence of his love to us while we are “aliens,” and enemies by wicked works ? To “love God” in the filial sense of the text, is impossible to any but a child of God. Hence, an individual must be a child of God before he can

yield this fruit of the Spirit; and if, as St. Paul says, all who "are sons," have "the Spirit of adoption sent forth into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father," they must have this Spirit to witness to their adoption, before they can bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; consequently, they cannot derive this witness from a consciousness of those fruits.

The same may be said of "peace and joy." We do not gain a knowledge of our acceptance from a consciousness of peace and joy; but, on the contrary, this peace and joy result from a knowledge of our acceptance. "Therefore, being justified by faith," saith St. Paul, "we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace evidently results from justification; and if so, that justification must be a subject of knowledge. A condemned criminal does not rejoice because a pardon has been granted, until he gains a knowledge of the fact. So it appears that as peace and joy are the "fruits of the Spirit," and as these do not precede but follow a knowledge of our acceptance, so the witness by which we gain this knowledge must precede the peace and joy resulting therefrom.

By some it has been alleged "that this witness of the Spirit does not result from a consciousness of the fruits of the Spirit in general, but from a consciousness of possessing saving faith." This scheme labors under several very serious difficulties.

1. The Scriptures give no intimation that we gain a knowledge of our acceptance from a consciousness that we possess faith. But everywhere this knowledge is attributed to the conjoint testimony of the Spirit of God with that of our own spirit.

2. If we gain a knowledge of our acceptance with God from a consciousness that we possess faith, by that faith must be implied either faith in any conceivable degree, or faith in a certain definite degree. To suppose the former, would be to adopt the unscriptural and absurd hypothesis, that every degree of faith is really justifying. To suppose the latter, would be to maintain that God has annexed the promise of pardon to faith in a certain limited and definite extent, which is contrary to fact. There is, perhaps, no problem in Christian character more difficult to solve than the precise amount or degree of faith which we possess at any given time. Before we can found our knowledge of acceptance on our consciousness of possessing faith, we must not only know that there is a certain degree of faith to which God has annexed the promise of pardon, and what that degree of faith is, but we must also certainly know that we possess that definite degree of faith; both of which are impossible.

3. Again; were it true that God had annexed the promise of pardon to a certain definite degree of faith, and that we could always certainly

determine whether we possess that degree of faith or not, still this theory would labor under the insuperable difficulty that it would make the knowledge of our acceptance precede our acceptance itself. In other words, it would involve the absurdity of teaching that we may know that we are accepted before we are accepted. For justifying faith, according to the Scriptures, *precedes* and is the condition of pardon; but, if a knowledge of our acceptance always accompanies justifying faith, then a knowledge of our acceptance must precede that acceptance. In other words, we must first know that we are accepted before we can be accepted. So that we may be well assured that our knowledge of our acceptance does not result from a consciousness that we possess faith.

From all that has been said, we arrive at the conclusion, — that, as the testimony of God's Spirit is not spoken of in Scripture as the peculiar privilege of a favored few, but as alike pertaining to all the "sons of God;" — that, as this witness is not identical with the witness of our own spirit, but a distinct witness, bearing conjoint testimony with our own spirit; — that, as, according to the Scriptures, it is the privilege of Christians to know that they are accepted of the Lord; — that, as none but God can bear primary testimony to this fact; — that, as the indirect testimony of the Holy Spirit is substantially nothing but the witness of our own spirit; — that, as such testimony is inadequate for the purpose for which the witness of the Spirit is designed; — that, as neither a consciousness of the "fruits of the Spirit" in general, nor of faith, can impart a knowledge of our acceptance with God at the time the witness of the Spirit is said to be possessed; — from all these considerations, we arrive at the conclusion, that the witness of the Holy Spirit, as possessed by the Christian, must be direct and distinct in its nature from the witness of our own spirit.

If called upon for a full explanation of the *manner* in which the Spirit operates so as to produce this direct witness, we are constrained to confess our weakness; the subject is "too wonderful for us." "The wind bloweth where it listeth," but we cannot comprehend "whence it cometh or whither it goeth;" so the Spirit of God, in a manner to us incomprehensible, moves on the hearts of men, and bears witness to the believer that he is a child of God. But as to the fact of this witness, it is a matter expressly revealed.

We cannot better express the sense in which we understand the fact, than by adopting the language of Mr. Wesley: —

"The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for

me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

We will close this lecture by noticing some of the leading objections to the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit for which we have contended.

1. It is objected, *that "two witnesses to the same fact, if both good, are not needed; and if not good, they are useless."*

To this we reply, that the two witnesses do not both depose directly to the same fact. The Spirit of God alone is directly and immediately cognizant to the fact of our adoption, and it alone bears direct testimony to that fact. Our own spirit, though a conjoint witness with the Spirit of God to the same fact, testifies not directly, but indirectly. It witnesses to our adoption only by assuring us that we have the *direct* witness of the Spirit of God to that fact. Thus in the hour of conversion, before we have time for good works, or the fruits of the Spirit, or even for engaging in a course of reasoning by which to infer our adoption by comparing our experience with the Scripture marks of regeneration, the Holy Spirit directly assures us that God loves us, and freely accepts us in Christ Jesus; — immediately upon this evidence of the pardoning love of God, "we love him because he first loved us," joy and peace spring up in the soul, and then first we receive the witness in our hearts, and hear,

"Thy sins are forgiven! accepted thou art! —

I listened, and heaven sprung up in my heart."

But how soon will we have occasion for the conjoint testimony of our own spirit! We may be tempted to believe that this direct witness is all a delusion; but the witness of our own spirit, — our consciousness that we have the fruits of the Spirit, — confirms us in the persuasion that we have not mistaken the testimony of the Spirit of God; and in this way the two witnesses continue their joint testimony to the fact that we are the children of God so long as we "love God and keep his commandments."

2. It is objected, *that "this doctrine involves the absurdity of a special revelation to every Christian, and leads to a superstitious reliance on impressions from our own imaginations."*

To this we reply, that, so far as the first branch of the objection is concerned, it is not contended that the witness of the Spirit conveys to the mind any new truth not contained in the Scriptures, but merely that a special and personal application is made by the direct agency of the Spirit, of truths already clearly revealed in the Bible. The direct influence of the Spirit in conviction does not teach the sinner

that anything is sin which the Bible had not declared to be such, but it so quickens the powers of the soul as to cause the sinner to feel that he is a sinner;—a fact of which he previously only had a speculative knowledge. Just so the witness of the Spirit possessed by the Christian does not impart to him any original truth or doctrine, but merely causes him to feel that the promises of pardon to the penitent believer, and the great Bible truths of salvation through the merits of Christ, personally and individually apply to him. So that, in the proper sense, there is no new revelation contended for in this view of the witness of the Spirit.

In reference to the latter branch of the objection, we reply, that it cannot be superstitious to rely on any doctrine as revealed in Scripture; but if the Scripture doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is perverted by any so as to lead to a dependence on impressions resulting from their own imaginations, the perverters of the doctrine, and not the doctrine itself, are to be blamed. The direct witness of the Spirit we believe to be a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture, and though some, through the deceitfulness of sin, may pervert it to the worst of purposes, it can never, on that account, be surrendered, but will still be ardently maintained by the thousands of sincere and experimental Christians, who derive therefrom their highest enjoyments in this life, and their richest prelibations of the life to come.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXVII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. How has this doctrine been viewed by Infidelity?</p> <p>2. How by the different classes of Christians?</p> <p>3. What is the correct view of its importance?</p> <p>4. Into what principal parts is the lecture divided?</p> <p>5. What is the first theory noticed on the subject?</p> <p>6. How is this theory illustrated?</p> <p>7. How is it shown that this theory denies the <i>real</i> influence of the Spirit?</p> <p>8. What is the second theory noticed?</p> <p>9. What is the only distinction between the two theories?</p> <p>10. In what two senses is it said the term <i>medium</i> may be used?</p> <p>11. How is the distinction between an <i>instrument</i> and an <i>agent</i> illustrated?</p> <p>12. Does this theory imply any <i>real</i> operation of the Spirit?</p> <p>13. What is the true scriptural view of the doctrine?</p> <p>14. Does the Spirit now operate so as to reveal new truths?</p> <p>15. How is it shown that the Spirit operates in <i>conviction</i>?</p> | <p>16. How is it shown to be absurd to deny the <i>direct</i> influence of the Spirit, and at the same time restrict its influence to baptized believers?</p> <p>17. What instances are given in which the Spirit did operate on the hearts of sinners?</p> <p>18. How is it proved that the Christian has the witness of the Spirit?</p> <p>19. What is the first view given of this witness?</p> <p>20. How is it refuted?</p> <p>21. What is the second view, and how is it refuted?</p> <p>22. What is the correct theory of this witness?</p> <p>23. What is the distinction between the indirect witness of the Spirit, and the witness of our own spirit?</p> <p>24. Does the indirect witness free us from doubt?</p> <p>25. How is it shown that neither a consciousness of the fruits of the Spirit in general, nor of faith, can give a knowledge of our acceptance, at the time the Spirit is said to bear its witness?</p> |
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LECTURE XXVIII.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

BY REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

MANY large volumes have been already published on this important subject. But the very length of them makes them hard to be understood, or even purchased, by common readers. A short, plain treatise on this head is what serious men have long desired, and what is here offered to those whom God has endowed with love and meekness of wisdom.

By *the saints*, I understand those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual, invisible church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant; those to whom all or any of these characters belong, I mean by the term *saints*.

Can any of these fall away? By *falling away*, we mean, not barely falling into sin. This, it is granted, they may. But can they fall totally? Can any of these so fall from God as to perish everlastingly?

I am sensible either side of this question is attended with great difficulties, such as reason alone could never remove. Therefore, "to the law and to the testimony." Let the living oracles decide: and if these speak for us, we neither seek nor want further witness.

On this authority, I believe a saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

I. For thus saith the Lord: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity; in his trespass that he hath

trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.' Ezek. xviii. 24.

That this is to be understood of eternal death, appears from the twenty-sixth verse: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them;" (here is temporal death;) "for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die." (Here is death eternal.)

It appears further from the whole scope of the chapter, which is to prove, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Verse 4. If you say, "The soul here means the body," I answer, that will die whether you sin or no.

Again; thus saith the Lord, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness," (yea, or to that promise as absolute and unconditional,) "and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for the iniquity that he hath committed shall he die." xxxiii. 13.

Again; "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." Verse 18. Therefore, one who is holy and righteous in the judgment of God himself may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

"But how is this consistent with what God declared elsewhere? 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments,—I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. I have sworn once by my holiness, that I will not fail David.'" Ps. lxxxix. 30—35.

I answer, there is no manner of inconsistency between one declaration and the other. The prophet declares the just judgment of God against every righteous man who falls from his righteousness. The psalmist declares the old loving kindnesses which God swore unto David in his truth. "I have found," saith he, "David, my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My hand shall hold him fast, and my arm shall strengthen him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." Verses 20, 21, 29. It follows: "But if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;—nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break. I will not fail David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." Verse 30, &c.

May not every man see that the covenant here spoken of relates wholly to David and his seed or children? Where then is the incon-

sistency between the most absolute promise made to a particular family, and that solemn account which God has here given of his way of dealing with all mankind ?

Besides, the very covenant mentioned in these words is not absolute, but conditional. The condition of repentance in case of forsaking God's law was implied, though not expressed ; and so strongly implied, that, this condition failing, not being performed, God did also fail David. He did "alter the thing that had gone out of his lips," and yet without any impeachment of his truth. He "abhorred and forsook his anointed," verse 38, the seed of David, whose throne, if they had repented, should have been "as the days of heaven." He did "break the covenant of his servant, and cast his crown to the ground." Verse 39. So vainly are these words of the psalmist brought to contradict the plain, full testimony of the prophet !

Nor is there any contradiction between this testimony of God by Ezekiel, and those words which he spake by Jeremiah. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love : therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." For do these words assert that no righteous man ever turns from his righteousness ? No such thing. They do not touch the question, but simply declare God's love to the Jewish church. To see this in the clearest light, you need only read over the whole sentence. "At the same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness ; even Israel, when I caused him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me," saith the prophet, speaking in the person of Israel, "saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel." xxxi. 1—4.

Suffer me here to observe, once for all, a fallacy which is constantly used by almost all writers on this point. They perpetually beg the question, by applying to particular persons assertions, or prophecies, which relate only to the church in general ; and some of them only to the Jewish church and nation, as distinguished from all other people.

If you say, "But it was particularly revealed to me, that God had loved me with an everlasting love ;" I answer, suppose it was, (which might bear a dispute,) it proves no more, at the most, than that you in particular shall persevere ; but does not affect the general question, whether others shall, or shall not.

II. One who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the inspired apostle, "War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

Observe, 1. These men (such as Hymeneus and Alexander) had once the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; which they once had, or they could not have "put it away."

Observe, 2. They "made shipwreck" of the faith, which necessarily implies the total and final loss of it. For a vessel once wrecked can never be recovered. It is totally and finally lost.

And the apostle himself, in his second Epistle to Timothy, mentions one of these two as irrecoverably lost. "Alexander," says he, "did me much evil; the Lord shall reward him according to his works." 2 Tim. iv. 14. Therefore one who is endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

"But how can this be reconciled with the words of our Lord, 'He that believeth shall be saved?'"

Do you think these words mean, "he that believes" at this moment "shall" certainly and inevitably "be saved?" If this interpretation be good, then, by all the rules of speech, the other part of the sentence must mean, "he" that does "not believe" at this moment, "shall" certainly and inevitably "be damned." Therefore that interpretation cannot be good. The plain meaning then of the whole sentence is, "He that believeth," if he continue in faith, "shall be saved; he that believeth not," if he continue in unbelief, "shall be damned."

"But does not Christ say elsewhere, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life?' John iii. 36. And 'He that believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life?'" Verse 24.

I answer, 1. The love of God is everlasting life. It is, in substance, the life of heaven. Now, every one that believes, loves God, and therefore "hath everlasting life." 2. Every one that believes "is" therefore "passed from death," spiritual death, "unto life;" and, 3. "Shall not come into condemnation," if he endureth in the faith unto the end; according to our Lord's own words, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" and, "Verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." John viii. 51.

III. Those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual, invisible church, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. For thus saith the apostle, "Some of the branches are broken off, and thou art grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Be not high minded, but fear; if God

spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold the goodness and severity of God! On them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off." Rom. xi. 17, 20—22.

We may observe here, 1. The persons spoken to were actually grafted into the olive tree.

2. This olive tree is not barely the outward visible church, but the invisible, consisting of holy believers. So the text, "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Verse 16. And, "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith."

3. These holy believers were still liable to be cut off from the invisible church into which they were then grafted.

4. Here is not the least intimation of those who were so cut off being ever grafted in again. Therefore, those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual, invisible church, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

"But how does this agree with the 29th verse, 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance?'"

The preceding verse shows: "As touching the election" (the unconditional election of the Jewish nation) "they are beloved for the fathers' sake;" for the sake of their forefathers. It follows, (in proof of this, that "they are beloved for the fathers' sake," that God has still blessings in store for the Jewish nation,) "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" for God doth not repent of any blessings he hath given them, or any privileges he hath called them to. The words here referred to were originally spoken with a peculiar regard to these national blessings. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." Numb. xxiii. 19.

"But do not you hereby make God changeable? Whereas 'with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' James i. 17." By no means. God is unchangeably holy; therefore, he always loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity." He is unchangeably good; therefore, he pardoneth all that "repent and believe the gospel." And he is unchangeably just; therefore, he "rewardeth every man according to his works." But all this hinders not his resisting, when they are proud, those to whom he gave grace when they were humble. Nay, his unchangeableness itself requires, that, if they grow high minded, God should cut them off; that there should be a proportionable change in all the Divine dispensations toward them.

"But how then is God faithful?" I answer, in fulfilling every promise which he hath made, to all to whom it is made, all who fulfil the

condition of that promise. More particularly, 1. "God is faithful" in that "he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear." 1 Cor. x. 13. 2. "The Lord is faithful to establish and keep you from evil," (if you put your trust in him;) from all the evil which you might otherwise suffer, through "unreasonable and wicked men." 2 Thess. iii. 2, 3. 3. "Quench not the Spirit; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil; and your whole spirit, soul and body, shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 19, &c. 4. Be not disobedient unto the heavenly calling; and "God is faithful, by whom ye were called, to confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. Yet, notwithstanding all this, unless you fulfil the condition, you cannot attain the promise.

"Nay, but are not 'all the promises, yea and amen?'" They are firm as the pillars of heaven. Perform the condition, and the promise is sure. Believe, and thou shalt be saved.

"But many promises are absolute and unconditional." In many, the condition is not expressed. But this does not prove there is none implied. No promises can be expressed in a more absolute form, than those above cited from the eighty-ninth Psalm. And yet we have seen a condition was implied even there, though none was expressed.

"But there is no condition, either expressed or implied, in those words of St. Paul,—'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'" Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Suppose there is not, (which will bear a dispute,) yet what will this prove? Just thus much,—that the apostle was at that time fully persuaded of his own perseverance. And I doubt not but many believers at this day have the very same persuasion, termed in Scripture, "The full assurance of hope." But this does not prove that every believer shall persevere, any more than that every believer is thus fully persuaded of his perseverance.

IV. Those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith our blessed Lord himself, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away. I am the vine, ye are the branches. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John xv. 1—6.

Here we may observe, 1. The persons spoken of were in Christ, branches of the true vine. 2. Some of these branches abide not in Christ, but the Father taketh them away. 3. The branches which abide not are cast forth, cast out from Christ and his church. 4. They are not only cast forth, but withered; consequently, never grafted in again; nay, 5. They are not only cast forth and withered, but also cast into the fire; and, 6. They are burned. It is not possible for words more strongly to declare, that even those who are now branches in the true vine may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

By this clear, indisputable declaration of our Lord, we may interpret those which might be otherwise liable to dispute; wherein it is certain, whatever he meant beside, he did not mean to contradict himself. For example: "This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing." Most sure, all that God hath given him, or, as it is expressed in the next verse, "every one which believeth on him," namely, to the end, he "will raise up at the last day," to reign with him forever.

Again; "I am the living bread;—if any man eat of this bread," (by faith,) "he shall live forever." John vi. 51. True; if he continue to eat thereof. And who can doubt of it?

Again; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John x. 27—29.

In the preceding text the condition is only implied; in this it is plainly expressed. They are my sheep that hear my voice, that follow me in all holiness. And "if ye do those things, ye shall never fall." None shall "pluck you out of my hands."

Again; "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own," namely, the apostles, (as the very next words, "which were in the world," evidently show,) "he loved them unto the end" of his life, and manifested that love to the last.

Once more; "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." John xvii. 11.

Great stress has been laid upon this text; and it has been hence inferred, that all those whom the Father had given him, (a phrase frequently occurring in this chapter,) must infallibly persevere to the end.

And yet, in the very next verse, our Lord himself declares, that one of those whom the Father had given him did not persevere unto the end, but perished everlastingly. His own words are, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdi-

tion." John xvii. 12. So one even of these was finally lost!—a demonstration that the phrase, "those whom thou hast given me," signifies here, (if not in most other places too,) the twelve apostles, and them only.

On this occasion, I cannot but observe another common instance of begging the question,—of taking for granted what ought to be proved; it is usually laid down, as an indisputable truth, that whatever our Lord speaks to or of his apostles, is to be applied to all believers. But this cannot be allowed by any who impartially search the Scriptures. They cannot allow, without clear and particular proof, that any one of those texts which related primarily to the apostles, (as all men grant,) belong to any but them.

V. Those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the apostle Peter, "If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (the only possible way of escaping them,) they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

That the "knowledge of the way of righteousness" which they had attained was an inward, experimental knowledge, is evident from that other expression, they had "escaped the pollutions of the world;" an expression parallel to that in the preceding chapter, verse 4, "having escaped the corruption which is in the world." And in both chapters, this effect is ascribed to the same cause; termed in the first, "the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue;" in the second, more explicitly, "the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And yet they lost that experimental knowledge of Christ, and the way of righteousness; they fell back into the same pollutions they had escaped, and were again "entangled therein and overcome." They "turned from the holy commandment delivered to them," so that their "latter end was worse than their beginning."

Therefore, those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions and perish everlastingly.

And this is perfectly consistent with St. Peter's words, in the first chapter of his former Epistle: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Undoubtedly so are all they who ever

attain eternal salvation. It is the power of God only, and not our own, by which we are kept one day, or one hour.

VI. Those who "see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and who have been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost," of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. For thus saith the inspired writer to the Hebrews, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. vi. 4, 6.

Must not every unprejudiced person see the expressions here used are so strong and clear, that they cannot, without gross and palpable wrestling, be understood of any but true believers?

They "were once enlightened;" an expression familiar with the apostle, and never by him applied to any but believers. So, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe." Eph. i. 17—19. So again, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is a light which no unbelievers have. They are utter strangers to such enlightening. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." Ver. 4.

"They had tasted of the heavenly gift," (emphatically so called,) "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." So St. Peter likewise couples them together: "Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts ii. 38; whereby the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, with all the other fruits of the Spirit. Yea, it is remarkable that our Lord himself, in his grand commission to St. Paul, (to which the apostle probably alludes in these words,) comprises all these three particulars. "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," (here contracted into that one expression, "they were enlightened,") "that they may receive forgiveness of sins," ("the heavenly gift,") "and an inheritance among them which are sanctified;" Acts xxvi. 18; which are made "partakers of the Holy Ghost," of all the sanctifying influences of the Spirit.

The expression, "They tasted of the heavenly gift," is taken from the Psalmist, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm xxxiv. 8. As

if he had said, Be ye as assured of his love, as of anything you see with your eyes. And let the assurance thereof be sweet to your soul, as honey is to your tongue.

And yet those who had been thus "enlightened," had "tasted" this "gift," and been thus "partakers of the Holy Ghost," so "fell away" that it was "impossible to renew them again to repentance."

"But the apostle makes only a supposition, 'If they shall fall away.'"

I answer, the apostle makes no supposition at all. There is no *if* in the original. The words are, *Αδυνατον τεξ απαξ φωτισθεντας, και παραπεσοντας*; that is, in plain English, "It is impossible to renew again unto repentance those who were once enlightened and have fallen away;" therefore they must perish everlastingly.

"But if so, then farewell all my comfort."

Then your comfort depends on a poor foundation. My comfort stands not on any opinion, either that a believer can or cannot fall away, not on the remembrance of anything wrought in me yesterday; but on what is to-day; on my present knowledge of God in Christ, reconciling me to himself; on my now beholding the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; walking in the light as he is in the light, and having fellowship with the Father and with the Son. My comfort is, that through grace I now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his Spirit doth bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. I take comfort in this and this only, that I see Jesus at the right hand of God; that I personally for myself, and not for another, have a hope full of immortality; that I feel the love of God shed abroad in my heart, being crucified to the world, and the world crucified to me. My rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have my conversation in the world.

Go and find, if you can, a more solid joy, a more blissful comfort, on this side heaven. But this comfort is not shaken, be that opinion true or false, whether the saints in general can or cannot fall. If you take up with any comfort short of this, you lean on the staff of a broken reed, which not only will not bear your weight, but will enter into your hand and pierce you.

VII. Those who live by faith may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the same inspired writer, "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. x. 38. "The just," the justified person, "shall live by faith," even now shall he live the life which is hid with Christ in God; and if he endure unto the end, he shall live with God forever. "But if any man draw

back," saith the Lord, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" that is, I will utterly cast him off; and accordingly the drawing back here spoken of is termed, in the verse immediately following, "drawing back to perdition."

"But the person supposed to draw back is not the same with him that is said to live by faith."

I answer, 1. Who is it then? Can any man draw back from faith who never came to it? But,

2. Had the text been fairly translated, there had been no pretence for this objection. For the original runs thus: *Ο δικαίος εκ πίστεως ζήσεται και εαν υποξείληται*. If *ο δικαίος*, "the just man that lives by faith," (so the expression necessarily implies, there being no other nominative of the verb,) "draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

"But the apostle adds: 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition.'" And what will you infer from thence? This is so far from contradicting what has been observed before, that it manifestly confirms it. It is a further proof that there are those "who draw back unto perdition," although the apostle was not of that number. Therefore those who live by faith may yet fall from God and perish everlastingly.

"But does not God say to every one that lives by faith, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?'"

The whole sentence runs thus: "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." True; provided "your conversation be without covetousness," and ye "be content with such things as ye have." Then you may "boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Do you not see, 1. That this promise, as here recited, relates wholly to temporal things? 2. That, even thus taken, it is not absolute, but conditional? And, 3. That the condition is expressly mentioned in the very same sentence?

VIII. Those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus again saith the apostle: "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?" Heb. x. 26—29.

It is undeniably plain, 1. That the person mentioned here was once

sanctified by the blood of the covenant. 2. That he afterward, by known, wilful sin, trod under foot the Son of God. And, 3. That he hereby incurred a sorer punishment than death, namely, death everlasting.

Therefore, those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

“What! Can the blood of Christ burn in hell? Or can the purchase of the blood of Christ go thither?”

I answer, 1. The blood of Christ cannot burn in hell, no more than it can be spilled on the earth. The heavens must contain both his flesh and blood until the restitution of all things. But,

2. If the oracles of God are true, one who was purchased by the blood of Christ may go thither. For he that was sanctified by the blood of Christ was purchased by the blood of Christ. But one who was sanctified by the blood of Christ may nevertheless go to hell; may fall under that fiery indignation which shall forever devour the adversaries.

“Can a child of God then go to hell? Or can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? If God is our Father once, is he not our Father always?”

I answer, 1. A child of God, that is, a true believer, (for he that believeth is born of God,) while he continues a true believer, cannot go to hell. But, 2. If a believer make shipwreck of the faith, he is no longer a child of God. And then he may go to hell, yea, and certainly will, if he continues in unbelief. 3. If a believer may make shipwreck of the faith, then a man that believes now may be an unbeliever some time hence; yea, very possibly, to-morrow; but, if so, he who is a child of God to-day, may be a child of the devil to-morrow. For, 4. God is the Father of them that believe, so long as they believe. But the devil is the father of them that believe not, whether they did once believe or no.

The sum of all is this: If the Scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual, invisible church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches;” those who so effectually know Christ as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

Therefore, let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXVIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is understood by the term saints ?</p> <p>2. What is meant by falling away ?</p> <p>3. How is it proved that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God may fall ?</p> <p>4. What objections to this are answered ?</p> <p>5. How is it shown that one endued with faith that purifies the heart may fall ?</p> <p>6. What objections are answered ?</p> <p>7. How is it shown that those who are grafted into the spiritual, invisible church, may fall ?</p> <p>8. What objections are answered ?</p> <p>9. How is it proved that "branches of the true vine" may perish everlastingly ?</p> | <p>10. Objections answered ?</p> <p>11. How is it proved that those who effectually know Christ may fall ?</p> <p>12. Objections answered ?</p> <p>13. How is it proved that those who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost may finally fall ?</p> <p>14. How is it proved that those who "live by faith" may fall and perish ?</p> <p>15. Objections answered ?</p> <p>16. How is it proved that those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant may fall and perish ?</p> <p>17. What objections are answered ?</p> <p>18. How is the whole matter summed up ?</p> |
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LECTURE XXIX.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

BY REV. JOHN FLETCHER.

DEFINITION.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION! why should the harmless phrase offend us? *Perfection!* Why should that lovely word frighten us? Is it not common and plain? Did not Cicero speak intelligibly when he called *accomplished* philosophers, *perfectos philosophos*, and an *excellent* orator, *perfectum oratorem*? Did Ovid expose his reputation when he said that “Chiron *perfected* Achilles in music,” or “taught him to play on the lute to *perfection*?” We give the name of “Christian perfection” to that maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of *grace* which belongs to the dispensation of *the Jews below us*, and from the ripeness of *glory* which belongs to *departed saints above us*. Hence it appears that by “Christian perfection” we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the church militant. In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation, made up of these gracious stars, perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our *visible* enemies, as well as for our earthly relations; and, above all, perfect love for our invisible God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase “perfect love” instead of the word *perfection*; understanding by it the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fulness of the Christian dispensation.

AN ADDRESS TO IMPERFECT BELIEVERS WHO CORDIALLY EMBRACE THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Your regard for Scripture and reason, and your desire to answer the end of God's predestination by being conformed to the image of his Son, have happily kept, or reclaimed, you from Antinomianism.

Ye see the absolute necessity of personally fulfilling the law of Christ; your bosom glows with desire to "perfect holiness in the fear of God;" and, far from blushing to be called Perfectionists, ye openly assert that a perfect faith, productive of perfect love to God and man, is the pearl of great price for which you are determined to sell all, and which, next to Christ, you will seek early and late, as the one thing needful for your spiritual and eternal welfare. Some directions, therefore, about the manner of seeking this pearl cannot but be acceptable to you, if they are scriptural and rational; and such, I humbly trust, are those which follow:—

I. If ye would attain an evangelically sinless perfection, let your full assent to the truth of that deep doctrine firmly stand upon the evangelical foundation of a precept and a promise. A precept without a promise would not sufficiently animate you; nor would a promise without a precept properly bind you; but a Divine precept and a Divine promise form an unshaken foundation. Let, then, your faith deliberately rest her right foot upon these precepts:—

"Hear, O Israel: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. vi. 5. "Thou shalt not hate thy neighbor in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord: ye shall keep my statutes." Lev. xix. 17—19. "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? &c. Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x. 12, &c. "Serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imaginations of the thoughts." 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Should unbelief suggest that these are only Old Testament injunctions, trample upon the false suggestion, and rest the same foot of your faith upon the following New Testament precepts:—"Think not that

I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, &c.; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, &c. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 17, 44, &c. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. xix. 17. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John xv. 12. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.; Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill, &c.; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8—10. "This commandment we have from him, That he who loves God love his brother also." 1 John iv. 21. "If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors." James ii. 8, 9. "Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing," (comparatively speaking,) "but" (under Christ) "the keeping of the commandments of God" is the one thing needful. 1 Cor. vii. 19. "For the end of the commandment is charity; out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. i. 5. "Though I have all faith, &c., and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law," (of liberty,) "and yet offend in one point," (in uncharitable respect of persons,) "he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty," which requires perfect love, and therefore makes no allowance for the least degree of uncharitableness. James ii. 10, 12.

When the right foot of your faith stands on these evangelical precepts and proclamations, lest she should stagger for want of a promise every way adequate to such weighty commandments, let her place her left foot upon the following promises, which are extracted from the Old Testament:—"The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxi. 6. "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18. That this promise chiefly refers to sanctification, is evident, 1. From the verses which immediately precede it: "Make you clean," &c.; "Cease to do evil, learn to do well,"

&c. And, 2. From the verses which immediately follow it: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel," (or disobey,) "ye shall be devoured with the sword. Again; "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" in a new and peculiar manner: "for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer. xxiv. 7; xxxi. 33. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

And let nobody suppose that the promises of the circumcision, the cleansing, the clean water, and the Spirit, which are mentioned in these Scriptures, and by which the hearts of believers are to be made new, and God's law is to be so written therein that they shall "keep his judgments and do them;"—let none, I say, suppose that these glorious promises belong only to the Jews; for their full accomplishment peculiarly refers to the Christian dispensation. Besides, if sprinklings of the Spirit were sufficient, under the Jewish dispensation, to raise the plant of Jewish perfection in Jewish believers, how much more will the revelation of the horn of our salvation, and the outpourings of the Spirit, raise the plant of Christian perfection in faithful Christian believers! And that this revelation of Christ in the Spirit, as well as in the flesh, these effusions of the water of life, these baptisms of fire, which burn up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purge God's spiritual floor, save us from all our uncleannesses, and deliver us from all our enemies; that these blessings, I say, are peculiarly promised to Christians, is demonstrable by the following cloud of New Testament declarations and promises:—

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without" unbelieving "fear," (that is, with perfect love,) "in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." Luke i. 68—75. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, who thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 3, 6. "If thou knewest the gift of

God," &c., "thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water: and the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." John iv. 10, 14. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me," (when I shall have ascended up on high, to receive gifts for men,) "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," to cleanse his soul, and to keep it clean. "But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given," (in such a manner as to raise the plant of Christian perfection,) "because Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii. 37, &c.; and his spiritual dispensation was not yet fully opened. Mr. Wesley, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," has published some excellent queries, and proposed them to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life. They are close to the point, and, therefore, the first two attack the imperfectionists from the very ground on which I want you to stand. They run thus: 1. "Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the gospel than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified? John vii. 39. 2. Was that glory which followed the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. i. 11) an external glory or an internal, viz., the glory of holiness? Always rest the doctrine of Christian perfection on this scriptural foundation, and it will stand as firm as revelation itself.

It is allowed, on all sides, that the dispensation of John the Baptist exceeded that of the other prophets, because it immediately introduced the gospel of Christ, and because John was not only appointed to "preach the baptism of repentance," but also clearly to point out the very person of Christ, and to "give knowledge of salvation to God's people by the remission of sins." Luke i. 77. And, nevertheless, John only promised the blessing of the Spirit, which Christ bestowed when he had received gifts for men. "I indeed," said John, "baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. Such is the importance of this promise, that it is particularly recorded, not only by the other three evangelists, (see Mark i. 8, Luke iii. 16, and John i. 26,) but also by our Lord himself, who said, just before his ascension, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5.

So capital is this promise of the Spirit's stronger influences to raise the rare plant of Christian perfection, that when our Lord speaks of this promise, he emphatically calls it "the promise of the Father;" because it shines among the other promises of the gospel of Christ as the moon

does among the stars. Thus, "Wait," says he, "for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me." Acts i. 4. And again, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." Luke xxiv. 49. Agreeably to this, St. Peter says, "Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this:" he has begun abundantly to fulfil "that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out" (bestow a more abundant measure) "of my Spirit upon all flesh. Therefore, repent and be baptized" (that is, make an open profession of your faith) "in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call," to enjoy the full blessings of the Christian dispensation. Acts ii. 17, 33, 38. This promise, when it is received in its fulness, is undoubtedly the greatest of all the "exceedingly great and precious promises which are given to us, that by them you might be partakers of the Divine nature," that is, of pure love and unmixed holiness. 2 Pet. i. 4. Have, therefore, a peculiar eye to it, and to these deep words of our Lord: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth," (and power,) "whom the world knows not, &c.; but ye know him, for he remaineth in you, and shall be in you. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." For "If any man" (that is, any believer) "love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 16, &c. "Which," says Mr. Wesley, in his note on the place, "implies such a large manifestation of the Divine presence and love, that the former in justification is as nothing in comparison of it." Agreeably to this, the same judicious divine expresses himself thus in another of his publications: "These virtues" (meekness, humility, and true resignation to God) "are the only wedding-garment; they are the lamps and vessels well furnished with oil. There is nothing that will do instead of them; they must have their full and perfect work in you, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen, wrathful state. There is no possibility of salvation but in this. And when the Lamb of God has brought forth his own meekness, &c., in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed, and our virgin hearts made ready for the marriage-feast. This marriage-feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union that can be between God and the soul in this life. This birthday of the Spirit of love in our souls, whenever we attain it, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as will blot out the remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before."

To make you believe this important promise with more ardor, consider that our Lord spent some of his last moments in sealing it with his powerful intercession. After having prayed the Father to sanctify his disciples through the truth firmly embraced by their faith, and powerfully applied by his Spirit, he adds, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who will believe on me through their word." And what is it that our Lord asks for these believers? Truly what St. Paul asked for the imperfect believers at Corinth, "even their perfection;" 2 Cor. xiii. 9; a state of soul this which Christ describes thus: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be made one in us, &c., that they may be one as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one, and that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 21—23. Our Lord could not pray in vain: it is not to be supposed that the Scriptures are silent with respect to the effect of this solemn prayer, an answer to which was to give the world an idea of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven; a specimen of the power which introduces believers into the state of Christian perfection; and therefore we read, that, on the day of Pentecost, the kingdom of Satan was powerfully shaken; and the kingdom of God, "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," began to come with a new power. Then were thousands wonderfully converted and clearly justified; then was the kingdom of heaven taken by force; and the love of Christ, and of the brethren, began to burn the chaff of selfishness and sin with a force which the world had never seen before. See Acts ii. 42, &c. Some time after, another glorious baptism, or capital outpouring of the Spirit, carried believers further into the kingdom of the grace which perfects them in one. And therefore we find that the account which St. Luke gives us of them, after this second capital manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in a great degree answers to our Lord's prayer for their perfection. He had asked that they all might be one; that they might be one as the Father and he are one; and that they might be perfected in one. John xvii. 21, &c. And now a fuller answer is given to his deep request. Take it in the words of the inspired historian: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were" once more "filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with" still greater "boldness: and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common, &c.; and great grace was upon them all." Acts iv. 31—33. Who does not see in this account a specimen of that great grace which our Lord had asked for believers, when he had prayed that his disciples, and those

who would believe on him through their word, might be perfected in one ?

It may be asked here, whether "the multitude of them that believed" in those happy days were all perfect in love ? I answer, that if pure love had cast out all selfishness and sinful fear from their hearts, they were undoubtedly made perfect in love : but as God does not usually remove the plague of indwelling sin till it has been discovered and lamented ; and as we find in the two next chapters an account of the guile of Ananias and his wife, and of the partiality or selfish murmuring of some believers, it seems that those chiefly who before were strong in the grace of their dispensation arose then into sinless fathers ; and that the first love of other believers, through the peculiar blessing of Christ upon his infant church, was so bright and powerful, for a time, that little children had, or seemed to have, the strength of young men, and young men the grace of fathers. And, in this case, the account which St. Luke gives of the primitive believers ought to be taken with some restriction. Thus, while many of them were perfect in love, many might have the imperfection of their love only covered over by a land-flood of peace and joy in believing. And, in this case, what is said of their being all of one heart, and mind, and of their having all things common, &c., may only mean, that the harmony of love had not yet been broken, and that none had yet betrayed any of the uncharitableness for which Christians in after ages became so conspicuous. With respect to the "great grace" which "was upon them all," this does not necessarily mean that they were all equally strong in grace ; for great unity and happiness may rest upon a whole family, where the difference between a father, a young man, and a child, continues to subsist. However, it is not improbable that God, to open the dispensation of the Spirit in a manner which might fix the attention of all ages upon its importance and glory, permitted the whole body of believers to take an extraordinary turn together into the Canaan of perfect love, and to show the world the admirable fruit which grows there ; as the spies sent by Joshua took a turn into the good land of promise before they were settled in it, and brought from thence the bunch of grapes which astonished and spirited up the Israelites, who had not yet crossed Jordan.

Upon the whole, it is, I think, undeniable, from the first four chapters of the Acts, that a peculiar power of the Spirit is bestowed upon believers under the Gospel of Christ ; that this power, through faith on our part, can operate the most sudden and surprising change in our souls ; and that, when our faith shall fully embrace the promise of full sanctification, or of a complete circumcision of the heart in the Spirit. the Holy Ghost, who kindled so much love on the day of Pentecost that

all the primitive believers loved, or seemed to love, each other perfectly, will not fail to help us to "love one another" without sinful self-seeking; and as soon as we do so, "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John iv. 12; John xiv. 23.

Should you ask how many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit, are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect love; I reply, that the effect of a sanctifying truth depending upon the ardor of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the power of the Spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost and the energy of faith under a rule which is not expressly laid down in Scripture. If one powerful baptism of the Spirit seals you unto the day of redemption, and cleanses you from all moral filthiness, so much the better. If two or more are necessary, the Lord can repeat them. "His arm is not shortened that it cannot save;" nor is his promise of the Spirit stinted. He says in general, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely. If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father" (who is goodness itself) "give his holy," sanctifying "Spirit to them that ask him!" I may, however, venture to say, in general, that, before we can rank among perfect Christians, we must receive so much of the truth and Spirit of Christ by faith, as to have the pure love of God and man shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and to be filled with the meek and lowly mind which was in Christ. And if one outpouring of the Spirit, one bright manifestation of the sanctifying truth, so empties us of self as to fill us with the mind of Christ, and with pure love, we are undoubtedly Christians in the full sense of the word. From the ground of my soul, I therefore subscribe to the answer which a great divine makes to the following objection:—

"But some who are newly justified do come up to this," (Christian perfection.) "What then will you say to these?" Mr. Wesley replies, with great propriety, "If they really do, I will say they are sanctified, saved from sin, in that moment; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more. But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified. They feel in themselves, more or less, pride, anger, self-will, and a heart bent to backsliding. And till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love. God usually gives a considerable time for men to receive light, to grow in grace, to do and suffer his will, before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. Sometimes he cuts short his work. He does the work of many years in a few weeks; perhaps in a week, a day, an

hour. He justifies or sanctifies, both those who have done or suffered nothing, and who have not had time for a gradual growth either in light or grace. And may he not do what he will with his own? 'Is thine eye evil, because he is good?' It need not therefore be proved, by forty texts of Scripture, either that most men are perfected in love at last, or that there is a gradual work of God in the soul; and that, generally speaking, it is a long time, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know. But we know likewise that God may, with man's good leave, cut short his work in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances. And yet there is a gradual work both before and after that moment. So that one may affirm, the work is gradual; another, it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction."—(*Plain Account*, page 115.) At page 155, the same eminent divine explains himself more fully, thus: "It" (Christian perfection) "is constantly preceded and followed by a gradual work; but is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step. An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers; none can deny this. Since that change they enjoy perfect love: they feel this, and this alone; they 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.' Now this is all that I mean by perfection. Therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach. 'But in some this change was not instantaneous.' They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought. It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies, yet there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it. 'But if they have this love now, they will lose it.' They may; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it now. They now experience what we teach. They now are all love. They now rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing. 'However, sin is only suspended in them; it is not destroyed.' Call it what you please. They are all love to-day; and they take no thought for the morrow." To return:—

II. When you firmly assent to the truth of the precepts and promises on which the doctrine of Christian perfection is founded; when you understand the meaning of these Scriptures, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, I will send the Comforter" (the Spirit of truth and holiness) "unto you. God has chosen you to" (eternal) "salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:"—when you see that the way to Christian perfection is by the word of the gospel of Christ, by faith, and by the Spirit of God; in the next place get tolerably clear ideas of this perfection. This is absolutely

necessary. If you will hit a mark, you must know where it is. Some people aim at Christian perfection ; but, mistaking it for angelical perfection, they shoot above the mark, miss it, and then peevishly give up their hopes. Others place the mark as much too low. Hence it is that you hear them profess to have attained Christian perfection, when they have not so much as attained the mental serenity of a philosopher, or the candor of a good-natured, conscientious heathen. In the preceding pages, if I am not mistaken, the mark is fixed according to the rules of scriptural moderation. It is not placed so high as to make you despair of hitting it, if you do your best in an evangelical manner ; nor yet so low as to allow you to presume that you can reach it without exerting all your abilities to the uttermost, in due subordination to the efficacy of Jesus' blood, and the Spirit's sanctifying influences.

III. Should you ask, "Which is the way to Christian perfection ? Shall we go to it by internal stillness, agreeably to this direction of Moses and David, 'The Lord will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. Stand still, and see the salvation of God. Be still, and know that I am God. Stand in awe, and sin not ; commune with your own heart, upon your bed, and be still ?' Or shall we press after it by an internal wrestling, according to these commands of Christ, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force,' &c. ?"

According to the evangelical balance of the doctrines of free grace and free will, I answer, that the way to perfection is by the due combination of prevenient, assisting free grace ; and of submissive, assisted free will. Antinomian stillness, therefore, which says that free grace must do all, is not the way. Pharisaic activity, which will do most, if not all, is not the way. Join these two partial systems, allowing free grace the lead and high preëminence which it so justly claims, and you have the balance of the two gospel axioms. You do justice to the doctrines of mercy and justice ; of free grace and free will ; of divine faithfulness in keeping the covenant of grace, and of human faithfulness in laying hold on that covenant, and keeping within its bounds. In short, you have the Scripture method of waiting upon God, which Mr. Wesley describes thus :—

"Restless, resigned, for God I wait ;
For God my vehement soul stands still."

To understand these lines, consider that faith is alternately a receiver and a bestower. First, it passively receives Divine grace, saying "Behold the handmaid of the Lord : let it be done to me according to thy word ;" and then it actively brings forth its heavenly fruit with earnest

labor. "God worketh in you to will and to do," says St. Paul. Here he describes the passive office of faith, which submits to and acquiesces in every Divine dispensation and operation. "Therefore, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and, of consequence, with haste, diligence, ardor, and faithfulness. Here the apostle describes the active office of that mother-grace which carefully lays out the talent she has already received. Would ye then wait aright for Christian perfection? Impartially admit the two gospel axioms, and faithfully reduce them to practice. In order to this, let them meet in your hearts as the two legs of a pair of compasses meet in the rivet, which makes them one compounded instrument. Let your faith in the doctrine of free grace and Christ's righteousness fix your mind upon God, as you fix one of the legs of your compasses immovably in the centre of the circle which you are about to draw; so shall you stand still, according to the first texts produced in the question. And then let your faith in the doctrine of free will and evangelical obedience make you steadily run the circle of duty around that firm centre; so shall you imitate the other leg of the compasses, which evenly moves around the centre, and traces the circumference of a perfect circle. By this activity, subordinate to grace, you will take the kingdom of heaven by force. When your heart quietly rests in God by faith, as it steadily acts the part of a passive receiver, it resembles the leg of the compasses which rests in the centre of the circle; and then the poet's expressions, "restless, resigned," describe its fixedness in God. But when your heart swiftly moves towards God by faith as it acts the part of a diligent worker; when your ardent soul follows after God, as a thirsty deer does after the water-brooks; it may be compared to the leg of the compasses which traces the circumference of the circle; and then these words of the poet, "restless" and "vehement," properly belong to it. To go on steadily to perfection, you must therefore endeavor steadily to believe, according to the doctrine of the first gospel axiom; and (as there is opportunity) diligently to work, according to the doctrine of the second; and the moment your faith is steadily fixed in God as in your centre, and your obedience swiftly moves in the circle of duty from the rest and power which you find in that centre, you are made perfect in the faith which works by love. Your humble faith saves you from Pharisaism, your obedient love from Antinomianism, and both (in due subordination to Christ) constitute you a just man made perfect according to your dispensation.

IV. Another question has also puzzled many sincere perfectionists; and the solution of it may remove a considerable hinderance out of your way. "Is Christian perfection," say they, "to be instantaneously brought down to us, or are we gradually to grow up to it? Shall we

be made perfect in love by a habit of holiness suddenly infused into us, or by acts of feeble faith, or feeble love, so frequently repeated as to become strong, habitual, and evangelically natural to us, according to the well-known maxim, 'A strong habit is a second nature?'"

Both ways are good ; and instances of some believers gradually perfected, and of others, comparatively speaking, instantaneously fixed in perfect love, might probably be produced, if we were acquainted with the experiences of all those who have died in a state of evangelical perfection. It may be with the root of sin as it is with its fruit. Some souls parley many years before they can be persuaded to give up all their outward sins, and others part with them as it were instantaneously. You may compare the former to those besieged towns which make a long resistance ; the latter resemble those fortresses which are surprised and carried by storm. Travellers inform us, that vegetation is so quick and powerful in some warm climates, that the seeds of some vegetables yield a salad in less than twenty-four hours. Should a northern philosopher say, "Impossible !" and should an English gardener exclaim against such mushroom salad, they would only expose their prejudices, as do those who decry instantaneous justification, or mock at the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of indwelling sin.

For where is the absurdity of this doctrine ? If the light of a candle brought into a dark room can instantly expel the darkness ; and if upon opening your shutters at noon, your gloomy apartment can instantaneously be filled with meridian light ; why might not the instantaneous rending of the veil of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of the eye of your faith, instantly fill your soul with the light of truth, and the fire of love ; supposing the Sun of righteousness arise upon you with powerful healing in his wings ? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul as quickly as the Spirit descended upon our Lord at his baptism ? Did it not descend as a dove, that is, with the soft motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly lights ? A good man said once, with truth, "A mote is little when it is compared to the sun ; but I am far less before God." Alluding to this comparison, I ask, if the sun could instantly kindle a mote ; nay, if a burning-glass can in a moment calcine a bone, and turn a stone to lime ; and if the dim flame of a candle can in the twinkling of an eye destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere ; how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose, that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying Spirit, and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure, seraphic love !

An appeal to parallel cases may throw some light upon the question

which I answer. If you were sick, and asked of God the perfect recovery of your health, how would you look for it? Would you expect to have your strength restored to you at once, without any external means, as the lepers who were instantly cleansed; and as the paralytic, who, at our Lord's word, took up the bed on which he lay, and carried it away upon his shoulders? Or by using some external means of a slower operation, as the ten lepers did, who were more gradually "cleansed as they went to show themselves to the priests;" or as King Hezekiah, whose gradual but equally sure recovery was owing to God's blessing upon the poultice of figs prescribed by Isaiah? Again; if you were blind, and besought the Lord to give you perfect human sight, how should you wait for it? As Bartimeus, whose eyes were opened in an instant? or as the man who received his sight by degrees? At first he saw nothing; by-and-by he confusedly discovered the objects before him; but at last he saw all things clearly. Would you not earnestly wait for an answer to your prayers now; leaving to Divine wisdom the particular manner of your recovery? And why should ye not go and do likewise with respect to the dreadful disorder which we call indwelling sin?

If our hearts are purified by faith, as the Scripture expressly testifies; if the faith which peculiarly purifies the hearts of Christians is a faith in "the promise of the Father," which promise was made by the Son, and directly points at a peculiar effusion of the Holy Ghost, the Purifier of Spirits; if we may believe in a moment; and if God may in a moment seal our sanctifying faith by sending us a fulness of his sanctifying Spirit; if this, I say, is the case, does it not follow, that to deny the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of sin, is to deny, contrary to Scripture and matter of fact, that we can make an instantaneous act of faith in the sanctifying promise of the Father, and in the all-cleansing blood of the Son, and that God can seal that act by the instantaneous operation of his Spirit: which St. Paul calls "the circumcision of the heart in" or by "the Spirit," according to the Lord's ancient promise, "I will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Where is the absurdity of believing that the God of all grace can now give an answer to the poet's rational and evangelical request?

"Open my faith's interior eye;
Display thy glory from above;
And sinful self shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love."

If a momentary display of Christ's bodily glory could, in an instant, turn Saul, the blaspheming, bloody persecutor, into Paul, the praying, gentle apostle; if a sudden sight of Christ's hands could, in a moment, root up

from Thomas' heart that detestable resolution, "I will not believe," and produce that deep confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!" what cannot the display of Christ's spiritual glory operate in a believing soul, to which he manifests himself, "according to that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself?" Again; if Christ's body could, in an instant, become so glorious on the mount that his very garments partook of the sudden irradiation, became not only free from every spot, but also "white as the light, shining exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;" and if our bodies shall be changed; if "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" why may not our believing souls, when they fully submit to God's terms, be fully changed, fully turned "from the power of Satan unto God?" When the Holy Ghost says, "Now is the day of salvation," does he exclude salvation from heart-iniquity? If Christ now deserves fully the name of Jesus, because he fully saves his believing people from their sins; and if now the gospel trumpet sounds, and sinners arise from the dead, why should we not, upon the performance of the condition, be changed in a moment from indwelling sin to indwelling holiness; why should we not pass in the twinkling of an eye, or in a short time, from indwelling death to indwelling life?

This is not all. If you deny the possibility of a quick destruction of indwelling sin, you send to hell, or to some unscriptural purgatory, not only the dying thief, but also all those martyrs who suddenly embraced the Christian faith, and were instantly put to death by bloody persecutors for confessing the faith which they had just embraced. And if you allow that God may cut his work short in righteousness in such a case, why not in other cases? Why not, especially, when a believer confesses his indwelling sin, ardently prays that Christ would, and sincerely believes that Christ can, now cleanse him from all unrighteousness?

Nobody is so apt to laugh at the instantaneous destruction of sin as the Calvinists, and yet (such is the inconsistency which characterizes some men!) their doctrine of purgatory is built upon it. For, if you credit them, all dying believers have a nature which is still morally corrupted, and a heart which is yet "desperately wicked." These believers, still full of indwelling sin, instantaneously breathe out their last, and without any peculiar act of faith, without any peculiar outpouring of the sanctifying Spirit, corruption is instantaneously gone. The indwelling man of sin has passed through the Geneva purgatory, he is entirely consumed; and, behold, the souls which would not hear of the instantaneous act of sanctifying faith, which receives the indwelling Spirit of holiness, the souls which pleaded hard for the continuance of indwelling

sin, are now completely sinless ; and, in the twinkling of an eye, they appear in the third heaven among the spirits of just Christians made perfect in love ! Such is the doctrine of our opponents ; and yet they think it incredible that God should do for us, while we pray in faith, what they suppose death will do for them, when they lie in his cold arms, perhaps delirious or senseless !

On the other hand, to deny that imperfect believers may and do gradually grow in grace, and of course that the remains of their sins may and do gradually decay, is as absurd as to deny that God waters the earth by daily dews as well as by thunder-showers ; it is as ridiculous as to assert that nobody is carried off by lingering disorders, but that all men die suddenly, or a few hours after they are taken ill.

I use these comparisons about death to throw some light upon the question which I solve, and not to insinuate that the decay and destruction of sin run parallel to the decay and dissolution of the body, and that, of course, sin must end with our bodily life. Were I to admit this unscriptural tenet, I should build again what I have all along endeavored to destroy, and (as I love consistency) I should promise eternal salvation to all unbelievers ; for unbelievers, I presume, will die, that is, will go into the Geneva purgatory, as well as believers. Nor do I see why death should not be able to destroy the van and the main body of sin's forces, if it can so readily cut the rear (the remains of sin) in pieces.

From the preceding observations it appears, that believers generally go to Christian perfection as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. They toiled some time very hard, and with little success. But after they had "rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, It is I, be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship ; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." Just so we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our hearts ; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection. Or, (to use another illustration,) God says to believers, "Go to the Canaan of perfect love. Arise ; why do ye tarry ? Wash away the remains of sin, calling, that is, believing, on the name of the Lord." And if they submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he had said, "Arise, and go towards the south." For when they arise and run, as Philip did, the Spirit of the Lord takes them, as he did the evangelist ; and they are found in the New Jerusalem, as Philip was found at Azotus. They "dwell in God," (or in perfect love,) "and God" (or perfect love) "dwells in them."

Hence it follows, that the most evangelical method of following after

the perfection to which we are immediately called, is that of seeking it now, by endeavoring fully to lay hold on the promise of that perfection through faith, just as if our repeated acts of obedience could never help us forward. But in the mean time we should do the work of faith, and repeat our internal and external acts of obedience with as much earnestness and faithfulness, according to our present power, as if we were sure to enter into rest merely by a diligent use of our talents, and a faithful exertion of the powers which Divine grace has bestowed upon us. If we do not attend to the first of these directions, we shall seek to be sanctified by works like the Pharisees; and if we disregard the second, we shall slide into solifidian sloth with the Antinomians.

V. Beware, therefore, of unscriptural refinements. Set out for the Canaan of perfect love, with a firm resolution to labor for the rest which remains on earth for the people of God. Some good, mistaken men, wise above what is written, and fond of striking out paths which were unknown to the apostles,—new paths marked out by voluntary humility, and leading to Antinomianism;—some people of that stamp, I say, have made it their business, from the days of heated Augustine, to decry making resolutions. They represent this practice as a branch of what they are pleased to call legality. They insinuate that it is utterly inconsistent with the knowledge of our inconstancy and weakness; in a word, they frighten us from the first step to Christian perfection; from an humble, evangelical determination to run till we reach the prize, or, if you please, to go down till we come to the lowest place.

You will never steadily go on to perfection unless you get over this mistake. Let the imperfectionists laugh at you for making humble resolutions; but go on steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, as says our church; and in order to this, steadfastly purpose to get a new heart, in the full sense of the word; for so long as your heart will continue partly unrenewed, your life will be partly unholy. And therefore St. James justly observes, that, “if any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man,” he loves God with all his heart, his heart is fully renewed; it being impossible that a heart still tainted in part with vanity and guile should always dictate the words of sincerity and love. Your good resolutions need not fail; nor will they fail, if, under a due sense of the fickleness and helplessness of your unassisted free will, you properly depend upon God’s faithfulness and assistance. However, should they fail, as they probably will do more than once, be not discouraged, but repent, search out the cause, and in the strength of free grace let your assisted free will renew your evangelical purpose, till the Lord seals it with his mighty fiat, and says, “Let it be done to thee according to thy” resolving “faith.” It is much better to be laughed at as

“poor creatures who know nothing of themselves,” than to be deluded as foolish virgins who fondly imagine that their vessels are full of imputed oil. Take, therefore, the sword of the Spirit, and boldly cut this dangerous snare in pieces. Conscious of your impotence, and yet laying out your talent of free will, say, with the prodigal son, “I will arise, and go to my Father.” Say, with David, “I will love thee, O Lord my God: I will behold thy face in righteousness: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress: I will keep it as it were with a bridle: I have said that I would keep thy word. The proud” (and they who are humble in an unscriptural way) “have had me exceedingly in derision; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.” Say, with St. Paul, “I am determined not to know anything save Jesus, and him crucified;” and with Jacob, “I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.” And, to sum up all good resolutions in one, if you are a member of the Church of England, say, “I have engaged to renounce all the vanities of this wicked world, all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and all the works of the devil; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and to keep God’s commandments all the days of my life.” That is, I have most solemnly resolved to be a perfect Christian. And this resolution I have publicly sealed by receiving the two sacraments upon it: baptism, after my parents and sponsors had laid me under this blessed vow; and the Lord’s supper, after I had personally ratified, in the bishop’s presence, what they had done. Nor do I only think that I am bound to keep this vow, but, “by God’s grace, so I will; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he has called me to this state of salvation” and Christian perfection; “and I pray unto him to give me his grace, that I may” not only attain it, but also “continue in the same, unto my life’s end.”—(*Church Catechism.*)

“Much diligence,” says Kempis, “is necessary to him that will profit much. If he who firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do who seldom or feebly purposeth anything?” But I say it again and again, do not lean upon your free will, and good purposes, so as to encroach upon the glorious preëminence of free grace. Let the first gospel axiom stand invariably in its honorable place. Lay your principal stress upon Divine mercy, and say, with the good man whom I have just quoted, “Help me, O Lord God, in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly.”

In following this method, ye will do the two gospel axioms justice: ye will so depend upon God’s free grace as not to fall into Pharisaic running; and ye will so exert your own free will as not to slide into Antinomian sloth. Your course lies exactly between these rocks. To

pass these perilous straits, your resolving heart must acquire a heavenly polarity. Through the spiritually-magnetic touch of Christ, the cornerstone, your soul must learn to point towards faith and works, (or, if you please, towards a due submission to free grace, and a due exertion of free will,) as the opposite ends of the needle of a compass point towards the north and the south.

VI. From this direction flows the following advice. Resolve to be perfect in yourselves, but not of yourselves. The Antinomians boast that they are perfect only in their heavenly representative. Christ was filled with perfect humility and love; they are perfect in his person; they need not a perfection of humble love in themselves. To avoid their error, be perfect in yourselves, and not in another. Let your perfection of humility and love be inherent; let it dwell in you. Let it fill your own heart, and influence your own life; so shall you avoid the delusion of the virgins, who give you to understand that the oil of their perfection is all contained in the sacred vessel which formerly hung on the cross, and therefore their salvation is finished; they have oil enough in that rich vessel; manna enough and to spare in that golden pot. Christ's heart was perfect, and therefore theirs may safely remain imperfect; yea, full of indwelling sin, till death, the messenger of the bridegroom, come to cleanse them, and fill them with perfect love at the midnight cry! Delusive hope! Can anything be more absurd, than for a sapless, dry branch to fancy that it has sap and moisture enough in the vine which it cumbars? or for an impenitent adulterer to boast that in the Lord he has chastity and righteousness? Where did Christ ever say, Have salt in another? Does he not say, "Take heed that ye be not deceived: have salt in yourselves?" Mark ix. 50. Does he not impute the destruction of stony-ground hearers to their "not having root in themselves?" Matt. xiii. 21. If it was the patient man's comfort that the root of the matter was found in him, is it not deplorable to hear modern believers say, without any explanatory clause, that they have nothing but sin in themselves? But is it enough to have the root in ourselves? Must we not also have the fruit, yea, "be filled with the fruits of righteousness?" Phil. i. 11. Is it not St. Peter's doctrine, where he says, "If these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ?" 2 Pet. i. 8. And is it not that of David, where he prays, "Create in me a clean heart," &c.? Away then with all Antinomian refinements; and if, with St. Paul, you will have salvation and rejoicing in yourselves, and not in another, make sure of holiness and perfection in yourselves, and not in another.

But, while you endeavor to avoid the snare of the Antinomians, do not

run into that of the Pharisees, who will have their perfection of themselves; and therefore, by their own unevangelical efforts, self-concerted willings, and self-prescribed runnings, endeavor to "raise sparks of their own kindling," and to warm themselves by their own painted fires and fruitless agitations. Feel your impotence. Own that "no man has quickened" and perfected "his own soul." Be contented to invite, receive, and welcome the light of life; but never attempt to form or to engross it. It is your duty to wait for the morning light, and to rejoice when it visits you; but if you grew so self-conceited as to say, "I will create a sun, Let there be light;" or if, when the light visits your eyes, you said, "I will bear a stock of light; I will so fill my eyes with light to-day, that to-morrow I shall almost be able to do my work without the sun, or at least without a constant dependence upon its beams;" would ye not betray a species of self-deifying idolatry and Satanical pride? If our Lord himself, as Son of man, would not have one grain of human goodness of himself; if he said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good" (self-good, or good of himself) "but God;" who can wonder enough at those proud Christians, who claim some self-originated goodness; boasting of what they have received as if they had not received it; or using what they have received without an humble sense of their constant dependence upon their heavenly Benefactor? To avoid this horrid delusion of the Pharisees, learn to see, to feel, and to acknowledge, that of the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, are all your Urim and Thummim, your lights and perfections. And, while the Lord says, "From me is thy fruit found," (Hos. xiv. 8,) bow at his footstool, and gratefully reply, "Of thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John i. 16.) For thou art "the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift." James i. 17. "Of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things; to thee," therefore, "be the glory forever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

VII. You will have this humble and thankful disposition, if you let your repentance cast deeper roots. For, if Christian perfection implies a forsaking all inward as well as outward sin; and if true repentance is a grace "whereby we forsake sin;" it follows, that, to attain Christian perfection, we must so follow our Lord's evangelical precept, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," as to leave no sin, no bosom-sin, no heart-sin, no indwelling sin, unrepented of, and, of consequence, unforsaken. He whose heart is still full of indwelling sin has no more truly repented of indwelling sin than the man whose mouth is still defiled with filthy talking and jesting has truly repented of his ribaldry. The deeper our sorrow for, and detestation of, indwelling sin are, the more penitently do we confess "the plague of our heart;" and,

when we properly confess it, we inherit the blessing promised in these words:—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward "chamber of imagery," where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires, and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone; that your soul, which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, a hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers, for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Through grace detect these evils, by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession drag out all these abominations. These sins, which would not have Christ to reign alone over you, bring before him; place them in the light of his countenance; and, if you do it in faith, that light and the warmth of his love will kill them, as the light and heat of the sun kill the worms which the plough turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day.

Nor plead that you can do nothing; for, by the help of Christ, who is always ready to assist the helpless, ye can solemnly say upon your knees what ye have probably said in an airy manner to your professing friends. If ye ever acknowledged to them that your heart is deceitful, prone to leave undone what ye ought to do, and ready to do what ye ought to leave undone, ye can undoubtedly make the same confession to God. Complain to him who can help you, as ye have done to those who cannot. Lament, as you are able, the darkness of your mind, the stiffness of your will, the dulness or exorbitancy of your affections; and importunately entreat the God of all grace to "renew a right spirit within" you. If ye "sorrow after this godly sort, what carefulness" will be "wrought in you! what indignation! what fear! what vehement desire! what zeal! yea, what revenge!" Ye will then sing in faith what the imperfectionists sing in unbelief:—

"O how I hate those lusts of mine,
That crucified my God;
Those sins that pierced and nailed his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood!

Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
 My heart hath so decreed ;
 Nor will I spare those guilty things
 That made my Saviour bleed.

While, with a melting, broken heart,
 My murdered Lord I view,
 I'll raise revenge against my sins,
 And slay the murderers too."

VIII. Closely connected with this deep repentance is the practice of a judicious, universal self-denial. "If thou wilt be perfect," says our Lord, "deny thyself: take up thy cross daily, and follow me. He that loveth father or mother" (much more he that loveth praise, pleasure, or money) "more than me, is not worthy of me;" nay, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for my sake shall find it." Many desire to live and reign with Christ, but few choose to suffer and die with him. However, as the way of the cross leads to heaven, it undoubtedly leads to Christian perfection. To avoid the cross, therefore, or to decline drinking the cup of vinegar and gall which God permits your friends or foes to mix for you, is to throw away the aloes which Divine wisdom puts to the breast of the mother of harlots to wean you from her and her witchcrafts; it is to refuse a medicine which is kindly prepared to restore your health and appetite; in a word, it is to renounce the Physician who heals all our infirmities when we take his bitter draughts, submit to have our imposthumes opened by his sharp lancet, and yield to have our proud flesh wasted away by his painful caustics. Our Lord was made a perfect Saviour through sufferings; and we may be made perfect Christians in the same manner. We may be called to suffer till all that which we have brought out of spiritual Egypt is consumed in a howling wilderness, in a dismal Gethsemane, or on a shameful Calvary. Should this lot be reserved for us, let us not imitate our Lord's imperfect disciples, who "forsook him and fled;" but let us stand the fiery trial till all our fetters are melted, and all our dross is purged away. Fire is of a purgative nature; it separates the dross from the gold; and the fiercer it is, the more quick and powerful is its operation. "He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, &c., when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Isaiah iv. 3, 4. "I will bring the third part through the fire, saith the Lord, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The

Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9. Therefore, if the Lord should suffer the best men in his camp, or the strongest men in Satan's army, to cast you into a furnace of fiery temptations, come not out of it till you are called. "Let patience have its perfect work." Meekly keep your trying station till your heart is disengaged from all that is earthly, and till the sense of God's preserving power kindles in you such a faith in his omnipotent love as few experimentally know, but they who have seen themselves, like the mysterious bush in Horeb, burning, and yet unconsumed; or they who can say with St. Paul, "We are killed all the day long; and behold, we live!"

"Temptations," says Kempis, "are often very profitable to men, though they be troublesome and grievous: for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed. All the saints have passed through, and profited by, many tribulations; and they that could not bear temptations became reprobates, and fell away." "My son," adds the author of Ecclesiasticus, (chap. ii. 1—5,) "if thou come to serve the Lord," in the perfect beauty of holiness, "prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright; constantly endure and make not haste in the time of trouble. Whatever is brought upon thee, take cheerfully; and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. For gold is" tried and purified "in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity." And therefore says St. James, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried," (if he stands the fiery trial,) "he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him" with the love which endureth temptation and all things; that is, with perfect love. (James i. 12.) Patiently endure, then, when God, "for a season, if need be," will suffer you to be "in heaviness through manifold temptations." By this means, "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

IX. Deep repentance is good, gospel self-denial is excellent, and a degree of patient resignation in trials is of unspeakable use to attain the perfection of love; but, as faith immediately works by love, it is of far more immediate use to purify the soul. Hence it is, that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles so strongly insist upon faith; assuring us, that if we will not believe, we shall not be established; that if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God, we shall be saved, and rivers of living water shall flow from our inmost souls; that our hearts are purified by faith; and that we are saved by grace through faith. They tell us that Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious

church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Now, if believers are to be cleansed and made without blemish by the word, which testifies of the all-atoning blood and the love of the Spirit, it is evident that they are to be sanctified by faith; for faith, or believing, has as necessary a reference to the word, as eating has to food. For the same reason the apostle observes, that "they who believe enter into rest;" that "a promise being given us to enter in," we should "take care not to fall short of it through unbelief;" that we ought to take warning by the Israelites, who "could not enter" into the land of promise, "through unbelief;" that we are "filled with all joy and peace in believing;" and that Christ "is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God through him." Now coming, in the Scripture language, is another expression for believing; "He that cometh to God," says the apostle, "must believe." Hence it appears, that faith is peculiarly necessary to those who will be saved to the uttermost,—especially a firm faith in the capital promise of the gospel of Christ, the promise of the "Spirit of holiness," from the Father, through the Son. For "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Or how can they earnestly plead the truth, and steadily wait for the performance of a promise in which they have no faith? This doctrine of faith is supported by Peter's words: "God, who knoweth the hearts," (of penitent believers,) "bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, and purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xv. 8, 9. For the same "Spirit of faith," which initially purifies our hearts when we cordially believe the pardoning love of God, completely cleanses them when we fully believe his sanctifying love.

X. This direction about faith being of the utmost importance, I shall confirm and explain it by an extract from Mr. Wesley's forty-third sermon, which points out "the Scripture way of salvation." "Though it be allowed," says this judicious divine, "that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree. Not in the same degree; for these fruits are only necessary conditionally,—if there be time and opportunity for them, otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified. Not in the same sense; for this repentance and these fruits are only remotely necessary,—necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is immediately and directly necessary to sanctification.

It remains, that faith is the only condition which is immediately and proximately necessary to sanctification.

“But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love? It is a Divine evidence and conviction,—1. That God hath promised it in the Holy Scriptures. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine, there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this than the ancient promise: ‘Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.’ How clearly does this express the being perfected in love! how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein? 2. It is a Divine evidence and conviction, that what God has promised he is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that with men it is impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean; to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing with God all things are possible. 3. It is an evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. We may therefore boldly say at any point of time, ‘Now is the day of salvation. Behold, all things are now ready; come to the marriage.’ 4. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more,—a Divine evidence and conviction that he doeth it. In that hour it is done. God says to the inmost soul, ‘According to thy faith be it unto thee.’ Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean from all unrighteousness.”

Those who have low ideas of faith will probably be surprised to see how much Mr. Wesley ascribes to that Christian grace; and inquire why he so nearly connects our believing that God cleanses us from all sin with God’s actual cleansing of us from all sin. But their wonder will cease, if they consider the definition which this divine gives of faith in the same sermon: “Faith in general,” says he, “is defined by the apostle an ‘evidence,’ a Divine evidence and conviction (the word used by the apostle means both) ‘of things not seen;’ not visible, nor perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural evidence of God and of the things of God, a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof; accordingly the Scripture speaks of God’s giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul; God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of

Jesus Christ.' And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of 'the eyes of our understanding being opened.' By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our souls both opened and enlightened, we see the things which the natural eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard. We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the spiritual world, which is all around about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being; and we see the eternal world piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed."

From this striking definition of faith, it is evident that the doctrine of this address exactly coincides with Mr. Wesley's sermon; with this verbal difference only, that what he calls faith, implying a "twofold operation of the Spirit," productive of spiritual light, and supernatural sight, I have called faith apprehending a sanctifying baptism or outpouring of the Spirit. I make this remark for the sake of those who fancy that, when a doctrine is clothed with expressions which are not quite familiar to them, it is a new doctrine; although these expressions should be as scriptural as those of a "baptism" or "outpouring of the Spirit," which are used by some of the prophets, by John the Baptist, by the four Evangelists, and by Christ himself.

I have already pointed out the close connection there is between an act of faith which fully apprehends the sanctifying promise of the Father, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, which makes an end of moral corruption by forcing the lingering man of sin instantaneously to breathe out his last. Mr. Wesley, in the above quoted sermon, touches upon this delicate subject in so clear and concise a manner, that, while his discourse is before me, for the sake of those who have it not at hand, I shall transcribe the whole passage, and by this means put the seal of that eminent divine to what I have advanced in the preceding pages about sanctifying faith, and the quick destruction of sin.

"Does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously? Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some. I mean in this sense: they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin 'by the breath of his mouth,' in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does; a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. Thou, therefore, look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described,—in all those good works whereunto thou art created anew in Christ Jesus. There is then no danger; you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expecta-

tion. For, were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope; it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it, then, every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, 'I must first be or do thus or thus.' Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points,—Expect it by faith; expect it as you are; and expect it now. To deny one of them, is to deny them all; to allow one, is to allow them all. Do you believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true, then, to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but 'Christ died.' And if you look for it as you are, then expect it now. Stay for nothing. Why should you? Christ is ready; and he is all you want. He is waiting for you; he is at the door. Let your inmost soul cry out,

‘Come in, come in, thou heavenly Guest,
Nor hence again remove;
But sup with me, and let the feast
Be everlasting love.’”

XI. Social prayer is closely connected with faith in the capital promise of the sanctifying Spirit; and therefore I earnestly recommend that means of grace, where it can be had, as being eminently conducive to the attaining of Christian perfection. When many believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle with God in prayer together, you may compare them to many diligent hands which work a large pump. At such times, particularly, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are opened, and “rivers of living water” flow into the hearts of obedient believers.

“In Christ when brethren join,
And follow after peace,
The fellowship divine
He promises to bless;
His chiefest graces to bestow,
Where two or three are met below.

Where unity takes place,
The joys of heaven we prove;

This is the gospel grace,
The unction from above ;
The Spirit on all believers shed,
Descending swift from Christ their head."

Accordingly we read, that when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the disciples "were all with one accord in one place." And, when he confirmed that kingdom, they were lifting up "their voice to God with one accord." See Acts ii. 1 ; and iv. 24. Thus also the believers at Samaria were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, while Peter and John prayed with them, and laid hands upon them.

XII. But perhaps thou art alone. As a solitary bird which sitteth upon the housetop, thou lookest for a companion who may go with thee through the deepest travail of the regeneration. But alas ! thou lookest in vain ; all the professors about thee seem satisfied with their former experiences, and with self-imputed or self-conceited perfection. When thou givest them a hint of thy want of power from on high, and of thy hunger and thirst after a fulness of righteousness, they do not sympathize with thee. And, indeed, how can they ? "They are full" already ; "they reign without thee ; they have need of nothing." They do not sensibly want that "God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith ; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints" (perfected in love) "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 16, &c. They look upon thee as a whimsical person, full of singular notions, and they rather damp than enliven thy hopes. Thy circumstances are sad ; but do not give place to despair ; no, not for a moment. In the name of Christ, who could not get even Peter, James, and John to watch with him one hour, and who was obliged to go through his agony alone ; in his name, I say, "Cast not away thy confidence, which has great recompense of reward." Under all thy discouragements, remember that, after all, Divine grace is not confined to numbers, any more than to a few. When all outward helps fail thee, make the more of Christ, on whom sufficient help is laid for thee,—Christ, who says, "I will go with thee through fire and water ; the former shall not burn thee, nor the latter drown thee." Jacob was alone when he wrestled with the angel, yet he prevailed ; and, if "the servant is not above his master," wonder not that it should be said of thee, as of thy Lord, when he went through his greatest temptations, "Of the people there was none with him."

Should thy conflicts be “with confused noise, with burning, and fuel of fire;” should thy “Jerusalem be built in troublous times;” should the Lord “shake not the earth only, but also heaven;” should “deep call unto deep at the noise of his waterspouts;” should “all his waves and billows go over thee;” should thy patience be “tried to the uttermost;” remember how in years past thou hast tried the patience of God, nor be discouraged. An extremity, and a storm, are often God’s opportunity. A blast of temptation, and a shaking of all thy foundations, may introduce the fulness of God to thy soul, and answer the end of the rushing wind, and of the shaking, which formerly accompanied the first great manifestations of the Spirit. The Jews still expect the coming of the Messiah in the flesh; and they particularly expect it in a storm. When lightnings flash, when thunders roar, when a strong wind shakes their houses, and the tempestuous sky seems to rush down in thunder showers, then some of them particularly open their doors and windows to entertain their wished-for Deliverer. Do spiritually what they do carnally. Constantly wait for full “power from on high;” but especially when a storm of affliction, temptation, or distress overtakes thee; or when thy convictions and desires raise thee above thyself, as the waters of the flood raised Noah’s ark above the earth; then be particularly careful to throw the door of faith, and the window of hope, as wide open as thou canst; and, spreading the arms of thy imperfect love, say, with all the ardor and resignation thou art master of,—

“My heart-strings groan with deep complaint;
 My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee;
 And every limb, and every joint,
 Stretches for perfect purity.”

But if the Lord is pleased to come softly to thy help; if he makes an end of thy corruptions by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness; if he drowns the indwelling man of sin by baptizing, by plunging him into an abyss of humility; do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come and make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for when “he was wroth, and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.” Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work; and by this means he disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. “Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul,—the sweet rest of Christian perfection, of per-

fect humility, resignation and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up with the good part and the one thing needful." But thou frettest; thou despisest this robe of perfection; it is too plain for thee; thou slightest "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price;" nothing will serve thy turn but a tawdry coat of many colors, which may please thy proud self-will, and draw the attention of others, by its glorious and flaming appearance; and it must be brought to thee with lightnings, thunderings, and voices. If this is thy disposition, wonder not at the Divine wisdom which thinks fit to disappoint thy lofty prejudices; and let me address thee as Naaman's servants addressed him: "My brother, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather, then, when he says to thee, 'I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God; wash in the stream of my blood, plunge in the Jordan of my humility, and be clean?'" Instead, therefore, of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin by gently coming in a still small voice, as by rushing in upon thee in a storm, a fire, or an earthquake. The Jews rejected their Saviour, not so much because they did not earnestly desire his coming, as because he did not come in the manner in which they expected him. It is probable that some of this Judaism cleaves to thee. If thou wilt absolutely come to Mount Zion in a triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the New Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave, then, all thy lordly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow thy King, who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem, "meek and lowly, riding upon an ass," yea, "upon a colt, the foal of an ass." I say it again, therefore, while thy faith and hope strongly insist on the blessing, let thy resignation and patience leave to God's infinite goodness and wisdom the peculiar manner of bestowing it. When he says, "Surely I come quickly to make my abode with thee," let thy faith close in with his word; ardently and yet meekly embrace his promise; it will instantly beget power; and with that power thou mayest instantly bring forth prayer, and possibly the prayer which opens heaven, humbly wrestles with God, inherits the blessing, and turns the well-known petition, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus," into the well-known praises, "He is come! He is come! Praise the Lord, O my soul!" &c. Thus repent, believe, and obey; and "He that cometh will come" with a fullness of pure, meek, humble love; "he will not tarry;" or if he tarries, it will be to give to thy faith and desires more time to open, that thou mayest, at his appearing, be able to take in more of his perfecting grace and sanctifying power; besides, thy expectation of his coming is of a

purifying nature, and gradually sanctifies thee. "He that has this hope in him," by this very hope "purifies himself, even as God is pure;" for "we are saved" into perfect love "by hope," as well as by faith. The stalk bears the "full corn in the ear," as well as "the root."

Up, then, thou sincere expectant of God's kingdom! let thy humble, ardent free-will meet convenient, sanctifying free-grace in its weakest and darkest appearance, as the father of the faithful met the Lord when "he appeared to him in the plain of Mamre" as a mere mortal: "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, three men stood by him!" So does free grace, if I may venture upon the allusion, invite itself to thy tent; nay, it is now with thee, in its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying influences. "And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground." Go and do likewise; if thou seest any beauty in the humbling "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the sanctifying "love of God," and in the comfortable "fellowship of the Holy Ghost," let thy free will run to meet them, and bow itself towards the ground. O for a speedy going out of thy tent, thy sinful self! O for a race of desire in the way of faith! O for incessant prostrations! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy Divine deliverer! "And Abraham said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." O for the humble pressing of a loving faith! O for the faith which stopped the sun when God avenged his people in the days of Joshua! O for the importunate faith of the two disciples who detained Christ when "he made as though he would have gone further! They constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." He soon, indeed, vanished out of their bodily sight, because they were not called always to enjoy his bodily presence. Far from promising them that blessing, he had said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, that he may abide with you forever. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This promise is still "yea and amen" in Christ; only plead it according to the preceding directions, and, as sure as our Lord is "the true and faithful witness," so sure will "the God of hope" and love soon "fill you with all joy and peace, that ye may abound in" pure love, as well as in confirmed "hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Lift up your hands which hang down: our Aaron, our heavenly High Priest, is near to hold them up. The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail: our Samuel, our heavenly prophet, is ready to cut them and their king in pieces before the Lord. "The promise is unto you."

You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, although you seem still afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centres,—Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door. “Behold,” says he, (and this he spake to Laodicean loiterers,) “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open, I will come in, and sup with him,” upon the fruits of my grace in their Christian perfection; “and he” shall sup “with me,” upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.

Hear his encouraging gospel: “Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened: if any of you” (believers) “lack wisdom,” (indwelling wisdom,—Christ, the wisdom and the power of God, dwelling in his heart by faith,) “let him ask of God, who giveth to all men, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask” as a believer, “in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive the things which he” thus “asketh.” But “whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;” for “all things” commanded and promised “are possible to him that believeth.” He who has commanded us to be perfect in love “as our heavenly Father is perfect;” and He who has promised speedily to “avenge his elect, who cry to him night and day; He will speedily avenge” you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. He will say to you, “According to thy faith be it done unto thee;” for he “is able to do far exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think;” and of his fulness we may all receive grace for grace. We may all witness the gracious fulfilment of all the promises which he has graciously made, “that by them we might be partakers of the Divine nature,” so far as it can be communicated to mortals in this world. You see that “with men” what you look for “is impossible;” but show yourselves believers; take God into the account; and you will soon experience that “with God all things are possible.” Nor forget the omnipotent Advocate whom you have with him. Behold, he lifts his once pierced hands, and says, “Father, sanctify them through thy” loving “truth, that they may be perfected in one;” and showing to you the fountain of atoning blood and purifying water, whence flow the streams which cleanse and gladden the hearts of believers, he says, “‘Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name; he will give it you: ask, then, that your joy may be full.’ If I try your faith by a little delay, if I hide my face for a moment, it is only to gather you with everlasting kindness. A woman, when she is in trav-

ail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy. Now ye have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask me no question; for you shall not have my bodily presence. But my Urim and Thummim will be with you, and the 'Spirit of truth' will himself 'lead you into all' Christian 'truth.' "

"O for a firm and lasting faith,
To credit all the Almighty saith;
To embrace the promise of his Son
And feel the Comforter our own!"

In the mean time, be not afraid to give glory to God by believing in hope against hope. "Stagger not at the promise" of the Father and the Son "through unbelief;" but trust the power and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your heart. Wait at mercy's door, as the lame beggar did at the "beautiful gate of the temple." "Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us: and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them." Do so too: give heed to the Father in the Son, who says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Expect to receive the one thing now needful for you, a fulness of the sanctifying Spirit. And, though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power which, at St. Peter's word, gave the poor cripple a "perfect soundness in the presence of all" the wondering Jews, will give you, at Christ's word, a perfect soundness of heart in the presence of all your adversaries.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done," —

Faith asks impossibilities;
Impossibilities are given;
And I, e'en I, from sin shall cease,
Shall live on earth the life of heaven."

Faith always works by love, — by love of desire, at least; making us ardently pray for what we believe to be eminently desirable. And if Christian perfection appears so to you, you might, perhaps, express your earnest desire of it in some such words as these: "How long, Lord, shall my soul, thy spiritual temple be a den of thieves, or a house of merchandise? How long shall vain thoughts profane it, as the buyers

and sellers profaned thy temple made with human hands? How long shall evil tempers lodge within me? How long shall unbelief, formality, hypocrisy, envy, hankering after sensual pleasure, indifference to spiritual delights, and backwardness to painful or ignominious duty, harbor there? How long shall these sheep and doves, yea, these goats and serpents, defile my breast, which should be pure as the holy of holies? How long shall they hinder me from being one of the worshippers whom thou seekest; one of those who worship thee in spirit and in truth? O help me to take away these cages of unclean birds! Suddenly come to thy temple! Turn out all that offends the eye of thy purity, and destroy all that keeps me out of the rest which remains for thy Christian people: so shall I keep a spiritual Sabbath, a Christian jubilee, to the God of my life: so shall I witness my share in 'the oil of joy,' with which thou anointest perfect Christians above their fellow believers. I stand in need of that oil, Lord. My lamp burns dim: sometimes it seems to be even gone out, as that of the foolish virgins: it is more like a smoking flax than a burning and shining light. O quench it not! Raise it to a flame! Thou knowest that I do believe in thee. The trembling hand of my faith holds thee, and though I have ten thousand times grieved thy pardoning love, thine everlasting arm is still under me to redeem my life from destruction; while thy right hand is over me, to crown me with mercies and loving kindness. But, alas! I am neither sufficiently thankful for thy present mercies, nor sufficiently athirst for thy future favors. Hence I feel an aching void in my soul, being conscious that I have not attained the heights of grace described in thy word, and enjoyed by thy holiest servants. Their deep experiences, the diligence and ardor with which they did thy will, the patience and fortitude with which they endured the cross, reproach me, and convince me of my manifold wants. I want 'power from on high;' I want the penetrating, lasting unction of the Holy One; I want to have my vessel, my capacious heart, full of the oil which makes the countenance of wise virgins cheerful; I want a lamp of heavenly illumination, and a fire of Divine love, burning day and night in my breast, as the typical lamps did in the temple, and the sacred fire on the altar; I want a full application of the blood which cleanses from all sin, and a strong faith in thy sanctifying word,—a faith by which thou mayest dwell in my heart, as the unwavering hope of glory, and the fixed object of my love; I want the internal oracle,—thy still, small voice, together with Urim and Thummim,* the new name 'which none knoweth but he that receiveth it;' in a word, Lord, I want a plenitude of thy Spirit, the full promise

*Two Hebrew words, which mean, "Lights and Perfections."

of the Father, and the rivers which flow from the inmost soul of the believers who have gone on to the perfection of thy dispensation. I do believe that thou canst and wilt thus 'baptize me with the Holy Ghost and with fire : ' help my unbelief : confirm and increase my faith, with regard to this important baptism. Lord, I have need to be thus baptized of thee, and I am straitened till this baptism is accomplished. By thy baptism of tears in the manger, of water in Jordan, of sweat in Gethsemane, of blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, and flaming wrath, on Calvary, baptize, O baptize my soul, and make as full an end of the original sin which I have from Adam, as thy last baptism made of ' the likeness of sinful flesh,' which thou hadst from a daughter of Eve. Some of thy people look at death for full salvation from sin ; but, at thy command, Lord, I look unto thee. ' Say to my soul, I am thy salvation ; ' and let me feel in my heart, as well as see with my understanding, that thou canst save from sin to the uttermost all that come to God through thee. I am tired of forms, professions, and orthodox notions, so far as they are not pipes or channels to convey life, light, and love to my dead, dark, and stony heart. Neither the plain letter of thy gospel, nor the sweet foretastes and transient illuminations of thy Spirit, can satisfy the large desire of my faith. Give me thine abiding Spirit, that he may continually shed abroad thy love in my soul. Come, O Lord, with that blessed Spirit ! come, thou and thy Father, in that holy Comforter ! come to make your abode with me ; or I sh^{al} go meekly mourning to my grave ! Blessed mourning ! Lord, increase it ! I had rather wait in tears for thy fulness than wantonly waste the fragments of thy spiritual bounties, or feed with Laodicean contentment upon the tainted manna of my former experiences. Righteous Father, I hunger and thirst after thy righteousness ! Send thy Holy Spirit of promise to fill me therewith, to sanctify me throughout, and to seal me centrally to the day of eternal redemption and finished salvation. Not for works of righteousness which I have done, but of thy mercy, for Christ's sake, save thou me by the complete washing of regeneration, and the full renewing of the Holy Ghost. And, in order to this, pour out of thy Spirit ; shed it abundantly on me, till the fountain of living water abundantly spring up in my soul, and I can say, in the full sense of the words, that thou livest in me, that my life is hid with thee in God, and that my spirit is returned to Him that gave it, — to thee, the First and the Last, my Author and my End, my God and my all."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXIX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. How is the doctrine defined ?</p> <p>2. By what precepts of the Old Testament is it established ?</p> <p>3. By what precepts of the New Testament ?</p> <p>4. By what promises of the Old Testament ?</p> <p>5. By what promises of the New Testament ?</p> <p>6. What great promise of this blessing is peculiarly connected with the gospel dispensation ?</p> <p>7. Why is it so necessary to have clear ideas of this perfection ?</p> <p>8. In its attainment, what are the respective parts of <i>free grace</i> and <i>free will</i> ?</p> | <p>9. In what sense is it <i>instantaneous</i>, and in what sense <i>gradual</i> ?</p> <p>10. What direction is given in reference to forming resolutions ?</p> <p>11. What is said in reference to inherent perfection ?</p> <p>12. What direction is given on the subject of repentance ?</p> <p>13. Of self-denial ?</p> <p>14. Of patient resignation ?</p> <p>15. Of faith ?</p> <p>16. Of social prayer ?</p> <p>17. What grounds of encouragement are presented ?</p> |
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LECTURE XXX.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

BY REV. JOHN FLETCHER.

AN ADDRESS TO PERFECT CHRISTIANS.

YE have not asked in vain, O ye men of God, who have mixed faith with your evangelical requests. The God who says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" the gracious God who declares, "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled;" that faithful, covenant-keeping God has now filled you with all righteousness, peace, and joy in believing. The brightness of Christ's appearing has destroyed the indwelling man of sin. He who had slain the lion and the bear,—he who had already done so great things for you,—has now crowned all his blessings by slaying the Goliath within. Aspiring, unbelieving self is fallen before the victorious son of David. The quick and powerful word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, has pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The carnal mind is cut off; the circumcision of the heart through the Spirit has fully taken place in your breasts; and now that mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus; ye are spiritually-minded; loving God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourselves; ye are full of goodness; ye keep the commandments; ye observe the law of liberty; ye fulfil the law of Christ. Of him ye have learned to be meek and lowly in heart. Ye have fully taken his yoke upon you; in so doing ye have found a sweet, abiding rest unto your souls; and from blessed experience ye can say, "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light; his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace; all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." The beatitudes are sensibly yours; and the charity described by St. Paul has the same place in your breasts which the tables of the law had in the ark of the covenant. Ye are the living temples of the Trinity; the Father is your life, the Son your light, the Spirit your love; ye are truly baptized into the mystery

of God; ye continue to drink into one Spirit, and thus ye enjoy the grace of both sacraments. There is an end of your "Lo here, and, Lo there!" The kingdom of God is now established within you. Christ's righteousness, peace, and joy are rooted in your breasts by the Holy Ghost given unto you, as an abiding Guide and indwelling Comforter. Your introverted eye of faith looks at God, who gently guides you with his eye into all the truth necessary to make you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Simplicity of intention keeps darkness out of your mind; and purity of affection keeps wrong fires out of your breast. By the former ye are without guile; by the latter ye are without envy. Your passive will instantly melts into the will of God; and on all occasions you meekly say, "Not my will, O Father, but thine be done." Thus are ye always ready to suffer what you are called to suffer. Your active will evermore says, "Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth. What wouldst thou have me to do? It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father." Thus are ye always ready to do whatsoever ye are convinced that God calls you to do; and whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat, or drink, or do anything else, ye do all to the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks; solemnly looking for and hastening unto the hour of your dissolution, and the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and your soul, being clothed with a celestial body, shall be able to do celestial services to the God of your life.

In this blessed state of Christian perfection, the holy anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, unless it be as the same anointing teacheth. Agreeably, therefore, to that anointing, which teaches by a variety of means, which formerly taught a prophet by an ass, and daily instructs God's children by the ant, I shall venture to set before you some important directions, which the Holy Ghost has already suggested to your pure minds; for I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, and giving you some hints, which it is safe for you frequently to meditate upon.

1. Adam, ye know, lost his human perfection in paradise; Satan lost his angelic perfection in heaven; the devil thrust sore at Christ in the wilderness, to throw him down from his mediatorial perfection; and St. Paul, in the same epistles where he professes not only Christian but apostolic perfection also, (Phil. iii. 15; 1 Cor. ii. 6; 2 Cor. xii. 11,) informs us that he continued to run for the crown of heavenly perfection

like a man who might not only lose his crown of Christian perfection, but become a reprobate, and be cast away. 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. And therefore, so run ye also, that no man take your crown of Christian perfection in this world, and that ye may obtain your crown of angelic perfection in the world to come. Still keep your body under; still guard your senses; still watch your own heart; and steadfast in the faith still resist the devil, that he may flee from you.

"We do not find," says Mr. Wesley, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," "any general state described in Scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this is impossible, it would be that of those who are sanctified, who are fathers in Christ, who, 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.' But it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are sanctified may yet fall and perish. Heb. x. 29. Even fathers in Christ need that warning; 'Love not the world.' 1 John ii. 15. They who rejoice, pray, and give thanks without ceasing, may nevertheless 'quench the Spirit.' 1 Thess. v. 16, &c. Nay, even they who are 'sealed unto the day of redemption,' may yet 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God.' Eph. v. 30."

The doctrine of the absolute perseverance of the saints is the first card which the devil played against man: "Ye shall not surely die, if ye break the law of perfection." This fatal card won the game. Man-kind and paradise were lost. The artful serpent had too well succeeded at his first game to forget that lucky card at his second. See him transforming himself into an angel of light on the pinnacle of the temple. There he plays over again his old game against the Son of God. Out of the Bible he pulls the very card which won our first parents, and swept the stake, paradise; yea, swept it with the besom of destruction. "Cast thyself down," says he; "for it is written" that all things shall work together for thy good, thy very falls not excepted: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." The tempter, thanks be to Christ, lost his game at that time; but he did not lose his card; and it is probable that he will play it around against you all, only with some variation. Let me mention one among a thousand. He promised our Lord that God's angels should bear him up in their hands, if he threw himself down; and it is not unlikely that he will promise you greater things still. Nor should I wonder if he was bold enough to hint, that when you cast yourselves down, God himself will bear you up in his hands, yea, in his arms of everlasting love. O ye men of God, learn wisdom by the fall of Adam! O ye anointed sons of the Most High, learn watchfulness by the conduct of Christ! If he

was afraid to tempt the Lord his God, will ye dare to do it? If he rejected, as poison, the hook of the absolute perseverance of the saints, though it was baited with Scripture, will ye swallow it down, as if it were honey out of the Rock of Ages? No; through faith in Christ, the Scriptures have made you wise unto salvation. You will not only fly with all speed from evil, but from the very appearance of evil; and when you stand on the brink of a temptation, far from entering into it, under any pretence whatever, ye will leap back into the bosom of Him who says, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; for," though "the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." I grant that, evangelically speaking, the weakness of the flesh is not sin; but yet "the deceitfulness of sin" creeps in at this door; and by this means, not a few of God's children, after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the sanctifying knowledge of Christ, under plausible pretences, have been again entangled therein, and overcome. Let their falls make you cautious. Ye have put on the whole armor of God; O keep it on, and use it with all prayer, that ye may to the last, stand complete in Christ, and be more than conquerors through him that has loved you.

II. Remember that "every one who is perfect shall be as his master." Now, if your Master was tempted and assaulted to the last; if to the last he watched and prayed, using all the means of grace himself, and enforcing the use of them upon others; if to the last he fought against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and did not "put off the harness" till he had put off the body; think not yourselves above him, but go and do likewise. If he did not regain paradise without going through the most complete renunciation of all the good things of this world, and without meekly submitting to the severe stroke of his last enemy, death, be content to be perfect as he was, nor fancy that your flesh and blood can inherit the celestial kingdom of God, when the flesh and blood which Emmanuel himself assumed from a pure virgin could not inherit it without passing under the cherub's flaming sword; I mean, without going through the gates of death.

III. Ye are not complete in wisdom. Perfect love does not imply perfect knowledge, but perfect humility, and perfect readiness to receive instruction. Remember, therefore, that if ever ye show that ye are above being instructed, even by a fisherman who teaches according to the Divine anointing, ye will show that ye are fallen from a perfection of humility into a perfection of pride.

IV. Do not confound angelical with Christian perfection. Uninterrupted transports of praise, and ceaseless raptures of joy, do not belong to Christian, but to angelical perfection. Our feeble frame can bear but a few drops of that glorious cup. In general, that new wine is too

strong for our old bottles; that power is too excellent for our earthen, cracked vessels; but, weak as they are, they can bear a fulness of meekness, of resignation, of humility, and of that love which is willing to obey unto death. If God indulges you with ecstasies, and extraordinary revelations, be thankful for them, but be not exalted above measure by them; take care lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them; and remember that your Christian perfection does not so much consist in building a tabernacle upon Mount Tabor, to rest and enjoy rare sights there, as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud Caiaphas, to the judgment hall of an unjust Pilate, and to the top of an ignominious Calvary. Ye never read in your Bibles; "Let that glory be upon you, which was also upon St. Stephen, when he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." But ye have frequently read there, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

See him on that ignominious gibbet! He hangs, abandoned by his friends, surrounded by his foes, condemned by the rich, insulted by the poor; he hangs, "a worm, and no man," a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. All that see him laugh him to scorn. They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him." There is none to help him. One of his apostles denies, another sells him, and the rest run away. Many oxen are come about him; fat bulls of Bashan close him on every side; they gape upon him with their mouths, as it were a ramping lion; he is poured out like water; his heart in the midst of his body is like melting wax; his strength is dried up like a potsherd; his tongue cleaveth to his gums; he is going into the dust of death; many dogs are come about him, and the counsel of the wicked layeth siege against him; his hands and feet are pierced; you may tell all his bones; they stand staring and looking upon him; they part his garments among them, and cast lots for the only remain of his property, his plain, seamless vesture. Both suns, the visible and invisible, seem eclipsed. No cheering beam of created light gilds his gloomy prospect; no smile of his heavenly Father supports his agonizing soul; no cordial, unless it be vinegar and gall, revives his sinking spirits. He has nothing left except his God. But his God is enough for him; in his God he has all things; and, though his soul is seized with sorrow, even unto death, yet it hangs more firmly upon his God by a naked faith, than his lacerated body does on the cross by the clinched nails. The

perfection of his love shines in all its Christian glory. He not only forgives his insulting foes and bloody persecutors, but, in the highest point of his passion he forgets his own wants, and thirsts after their eternal happiness. Together with his blood, he pours out his soul for them; and, excusing them all, he says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." O, ye adult sons of God, in this glass behold all with open face the glory of your Redeemer's forgiving, praying love; and, as ye behold it, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the loving Spirit of the Lord.

V. This lesson is deep; but he may teach you one deeper still. By a strong sympathy with him, in all his sufferings, he may call you to know him every way crucified. Stern justice thunders from heaven. "Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow!" The sword awakes; the sword goes through his soul; the flaming sword is quenched in his blood. But is one sinew of his perfect faith cut, one fibre of his perfect resignation injured, by the astonishing blow? No; his God slays him, and yet he trusts in his God. By the noblest of all ventures, in the most dreadful of all storms, he meekly bows his head, and shelters his departing soul in the bosom of his God. "My God. my God!" says he, "though all thy comforts have forsaken me, and all thy storms and waves go over me, yet into thy hands I commend my spirit. 'For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand,' where I shall soon sit, 'there are pleasures for evermore.'" What a pattern of perfect confidence! O ye perfect Christians, be ambitious to ascend to those amazing heights of Christ's perfection! "for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who knew no sin; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." If this is your high calling on earth, rest not, O ye fathers in Christ, till your patient hope and perfect confidence in God have got their last victory over your last enemy, the king of terrors.

"The ground of a thousand mistakes," says Mr. Wesley, "is, the not considering deeply that love is the highest gift of God,—humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love. It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this. The heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else. If you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, 'Have you

received this or that blessing?' if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that, from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom."

VI. Love is humble. "Be, therefore, clothed with humility," says Mr. Wesley. "Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do show that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile, in your own eyes. As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God; no, it will further it. Be, therefore, open and frank when you are taxed with anything. Let it appear just as it is; and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn, the Gospel." Why should ye be more backward in acknowledging your failings than in confessing that ye do not pretend to infallibility? St. Paul was perfect in the love which casts out fear, and therefore he boldly reprov'd the high priest; but, when he had reprov'd him more sharply than the fifth commandment allows, he directly confessed his mistake, and set his seal to the importance of the duty in which he had been inadvertently wanting. "Then Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." St. John was perfect in the courteous, humble love which brings us down at the feet of all. His courtesy, his humility, and the dazzling glory which beamed forth from a Divine messenger, whom he apprehended to be more than a creature, betrayed him into a fault contrary to that of St. Paul; but, far from concealing it, he openly confessed it, and published his confession for the edification of all the churches. "When I had heard and seen," says he, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then said he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant." Christian perfection shines as much in the childlike simplicity with which the perfect readily acknowledge their faults, as it does in the manly steadiness with which they "resist unto blood, striving against sin."

VII. If humble love makes us frankly confess our faults, much more does it incline us to own ourselves sinners, miserable sinners, before that God whom we have so frequently offended. I need not remind you, that your bodies are "dead because of sin." You see, you feel it; and therefore, so long as you dwell in a prison of flesh and blood, which death, the avenger of sin, is to pull down; so long as your final justification, as par-

doned and sanctified sinners, has not taken place; yea, so long as you break the law of paradisiacal perfection, under which you were originally placed, it is meet, right, and your bounden duty, to consider yourselves as sinners, who, as transgressors of the law of innocence and the law of liberty, are guilty of death,—of eternal death. St. Paul did so after he was “come to Mount Zion, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” He still looked upon himself as the chief of sinners, because he had been a daring blasphemer of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of his people. “Christ,” says he, “came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” The reason is plain. Matter of fact is and will be matter of fact to all eternity. According to the doctrines of grace and justice, and before the throne of God’s mercy and holiness, a sinner, pardoned and sanctified, must, in the very nature of things, be considered as a sinner; for, if you consider him as a saint, absolutely abstracted from the character of a sinner, how can he be a pardoned and sanctified sinner? To all eternity, therefore, but much more while death, “the wages of sin,” is at your heels, and while ye are going to “appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,” to receive your final sentence of absolution or condemnation, it will become you to say with St. Paul, “We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely” (as sinners) “by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ;” although we are justified judicially as believers, through faith,—as obedient believers, through the obedience of faith,—and as perfect Christians, through Christian perfection.

VIII. Humble love becomes “all things” (but sin) “to all men,” although it delights most in those who are most holy. Ye may and ought to set your love of peculiar complacency upon God’s dearest children,—upon those who, like yourselves, “excel in virtue;” because they more strongly reflect the image of the God of love, the Holy One of Israel. But, if ye despise the weak, and are above lending them a helping hand, ye are fallen from Christian perfection, which teaches us to bear one another’s burdens, especially the burdens of the weak. Imitate, then, the tenderness and wisdom of the good Shepherd, who carries the lambs in his bosom, gently leads the sheep which are big with young, feeds with milk those who cannot bear strong meat, and says to his imperfect disciples, “I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

IX. “Where the” loving “Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Keep, therefore, at the utmost distance from the shackles of a narrow, prejudiced, bigoted spirit. The moment ye confine your love to the people who think just as you do, and your regard to the preachers who exactly suit your taste, you fall from perfection and turn bigots. “I

entreat you," says Mr. Wesley, in his Plain Account, "beware of bigotry. Let not your love or beneficence be confined to Methodists, so called, only; much less to that very small part of them who seem to be renewed in love, or to those who believe yours and their report. O make not this your shibboleth!" On the contrary, as ye have time and ability, "do good to all men." Let your benevolence shine upon all; let your charity send its cherishing beams towards all, in proper degrees. So shall ye be perfect as your heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine upon all, although he sends the brightest and warmest beams of his favor upon "the household of faith," and reserves his richest bounties for those who lay out their five talents to the best advantage.

X. Love, pure love, is satisfied with supreme good,—with God. "Beware, then, of desiring anything but him. Now you desire nothing else. Every other desire is driven out. See that none enter in again. 'Keep thyself pure; let your eye' remain 'single, and your whole body shall be full of light.' Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense; no desire of pleasing the eye or the imagination; no desire of money, of praise, or esteem; of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back; but you need not: you may feel them no more. O 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.' Be patterns to all of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure which does not bring you nearer to God, nor regard any pain which does; that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by doing or suffering; that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure or pain, honor or dishonor, riches or poverty, is,—

'All's alike to me, so I
In my Lord may live and die.'"

XI. The best soldiers are sent upon the most difficult and dangerous expeditions; and, as you are the best soldiers of Jesus Christ, ye will probably be called to drink deepest of his cup, and to carry the heaviest burdens. "Expect contradiction and opposition," says the judicious divine whom I have just quoted, "together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul, 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ,' (for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you,) 'not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.' Phil. i. 29. 'It is given.' God gives you this opposition or reproach; it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the Giver, or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune? Will you not rather say, 'Father, the hour is come that thou shouldest be glorified; now thou givest thy child to suffer something for thee; do with me according to thy will!' Know

that these things, far from being hinderances to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of Providence, but profitable, yea, necessary for you. Therefore, receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness, with thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness."

Love can never do or suffer too much for its Divine Object. Be then ambitious, like St. Paul, to be made perfect in sufferings. I have already observed that the apostle, not satisfied to be a perfect Christian, would also be a perfect martyr, earnestly desiring to know the fellowship of Christ's utmost sufferings. Follow him, as he followed his suffering, crucified Lord. Your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; run after them both in the race of obedience, for the crown of martyrdom, if that crown is reserved for you. And if ye miss the crown of those who are martyrs indeed, ye shall, however, receive the reward of those who are martyrs in intention,—the crown of righteousness and angelical perfection.

XII. But do not so desire to follow Christ to the garden of Gethsemane as to refuse following him now to the carpenter's shop, if Providence now calls you to it. Do not lose the present day by idly looking back at yesterday, or foolishly antedating the cares of to-morrow; but wisely use every hour; spending them as one who stands on the verge of time, on the border of eternity, and who has his work cut out by a wise Providence from moment to moment. Never, therefore, neglect using the two talents you have now, and doing the duty which is now incumbent upon you. Should ye be tempted to it, under the plausible pretence of waiting for a greater number of talents, remember that God doubles our talents in the way of duty, and that it is a maxim advanced by Elisha Coles himself, "Use grace, and have" more "grace." Therefore, "to continual watchfulness and prayer, add continual employment," says Mr. Wesley; "for grace flies a vacuum, as well as nature; the devil fills whatever God does not fill." "As by works faith is made perfect, so completing or destroying the work of faith and enjoying the favor or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depend on every single act of obedience." If you forget this, you will hardly do now whatsoever your hand findeth to do. Much less will you do it with all your might, for God, for eternity.

XIII. Love is modest; it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence than to talkative forwardness. "In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin; be" therefore "slow to speak, nor cast your pearls before" those who cannot distinguish them from pebbles. Nevertheless, when you are solemnly called upon to bear testimony to the truth, and to say what

great things God has done for you, it would be cowardice or false prudence not to do it with humility. "Be then always ready to give an answer to every man who" properly "asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness" (without fluttering anxiety) "and with fear," with a reverential awe of God upon your minds. 1 Peter iii. 15. The perfect are burning and shining lights, and our Lord intimates that, as "a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all the house," so God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in a corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colors, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honor of the Father of lights and Author of every good gift,—if, without self-seeking, they disclose his glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not go and do likewise? Gold answers its most valuable end when it is brought to light, and made to circulate, for charitable and pious uses, and not when it lies concealed in a miser's strong box, or in the dark bosom of a mine. But when you lay out your spiritual gold for proper uses, beware of imitating the vanity of those coxcombs, who, as often as they are about to pay for a trifle, pull out a handful of gold, merely to make a show of their wealth.

XIV. Love, or "charity, rejoiceth in the" display of an edifying "truth." Fact is fact all the world over. If you can say, to the glory of God, that you are alive, and feel very well, when you do so, why could you not also testify, to his honor, that you live not, but that Christ liveth in you, if you really find that this is your experience? Did not St. John say, "Our love is made perfect, because as he is so are we in this world?" Did not St. Paul write, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk after the Spirit?" Did he not with the same simplicity aver, that, although he had nothing, and was sorrowful, yet he possessed all things, and was always rejoicing?

Hence it appears, that, with respect to declaring or concealing what God has done for your soul, the line of your duty runs exactly between the proud forwardness of some stiff Pharisees, and the voluntary humility of some stiff mystics. The former vainly boast of more than they experience, and by that means they set up the cursed idol, self; the latter ungratefully hide "the wonderful works of God," of which the primitive Christians spoke publicly in a variety of languages, and by this means they refuse to exalt their gracious benefactor, Christ. The first error is undoubtedly more odious than the second; but what need is there of leaning to either? Would ye avoid them both? Let your tempers and lives always declare that perfect love is attainable in this life. And when you have a proper call to declare it with your lips and

pens, do it without forwardness to the glory of God; do it with simplicity, for the edification of your neighbor; do it with godly jealousy, lest ye should show the treasures of Divine grace in your hearts with the same self-complacence with which King Hezekiah showed his treasures, and the golden vessels of the temple, to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon, remembering what a dreadful curse this piece of vanity pulled down upon him: "And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." If God so severely punished Hezekiah's pride, how properly does St. Peter charge believers to give with fear an account of the grace which is in them! and how careful should ye be to observe his important charge!

XV. If you will keep at the utmost distance from the vanity which proved so fatal to good King Hezekiah, follow an excellent direction of Mr. Wesley. When you have done anything for God, or "received any favor from him, retire, if not into your closet, into your heart, and say, 'I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou hast given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void, capable of being filled with thee and by thee, as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun? Grant, therefore, O Lord, that I may never appropriate thy grace to myself, any more than the air appropriates to itself the light of the sun, who withdraws it every day to restore it the next; there being nothing in the air that either appropriates his light or resists it. O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say, thine; for I acknowledge that the root from which they spring is in thee, and not in me.' The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace is thus to strip ourselves of it; without this it is extremely difficult not to faint in the practice of good works."—"And, therefore, that your good works may receive their last perfection, let them lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God, wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal which good works lose by this spiritual death."

XVI. Would ye see this deep precept put in practice? Consider St. Paul. Already possessed of Christian perfection, he does good works from morning till night. He warns "every one night and day with tears." He carries the gospel from east to west. Wherever he stops, he plants a church at the hazard of his life. But instead of resting in his present perfection, and in the good works which spring from it, he grows

“in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” unweariedly following after, if that he may apprehend that perfection for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus,—that celestial perfection of which he got lively ideas when he was “caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” With what amazing ardor does he run his race of Christian perfection, for the prize of that higher perfection! How does he forget the works of yesterday, when he lays himself out for God to-day! “Though dead, he yet speaketh;” nor can an address to perfect Christians be closed by a more proper speech than his: “Brethren,” says he, “be followers of me: I count not myself to have apprehended” my angelical perfection; “but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,” (settling in none of my former experiences, resting in none of my good works,) “and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the” celestial “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” In the mean time, you may sing the following hymn of the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, which is descriptive of the destruction of corrupt self-will, and expressive of the absolute resignation which characterizes a perfect believer:—

“To do, or not to do; to have,
Or not to have, I leave to thee;
To be, or not to be, I leave;
Thy only will be done in me.
All my requests are lost in one;
Father, thy only will be done.

Suffice that, for the season past,
Myself in things divine I sought,
For comforts cried with eager haste,
And murmured that I found them not;
I leave it now to thee alone;
Father, thy only will be done.

Thy gifts I clamor for no more,
Or selfishly thy grace require,
An evil heart to varnish o’er;
Jesus the Giver I desire;
After the flesh no longer known;
Father, thy only will be done.

Welcome alike the crown or cross;
Trouble I cannot ask, nor peace,
Nor toil, nor rest, nor gain, nor loss,
Nor joy, nor grief, nor pain, nor ease,

Nor life, nor death ; but ever groan,
 Father, thy only will be done."

This hymn suits all the believers who are at the bottom of Mount Sion, and begin to join the spirits of just men made perfect. But, when the triumphal chariot of perfect love gloriously carries you to the top of perfection's hill ; when you are raised far above the common heights of the perfect ; when you are almost translated into glory, like Elijah ; then you may sing another hymn of the same Christian poet :—

"Who in Jesus confide,
 They are bold to outride
 The storms of affliction beneath ;
 With the prophet they soar
 To that heavenly shore,
 And outfly all the arrows of death.

By faith we are come
 To our permanent home ;
 By hope we the rapture improve ;
 By love we still rise,
 And look down on the skies ;
 For the heaven of heavens is love !

Who on earth can conceive
 How happy we live
 In the city of God, the great King !
 What a concert of praise,
 When our Jesus's grace
 The whole heavenly company sing.

What a rapturous song,
 When the glorified throng
 In the spirit of harmony join !
 Join all the glad choirs,
 Hearts, voices, and lyres,
 And the burden is mercy divine !"

But when you cannot rise to those rapturous heights of perfection, you need not give up your shield. You may still rank among the perfect, if you can heartily join in this version of Psalm cxxx. :—

"Lord, thou dost the grace impart !
 Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
 I will as my Master be,
 Rooted in humility.

Now, dear Lord, that I thee know,
 Nothing will I seek below,

Aim at nothing great or high,
Lowly both in heart and eye ;

Simple, teachable, and mild,
Awed into a little child,
Quiet now without my food,
Weaned from every creature-good.

Hangs my new-born soul on thee,
Kept from all idolatry ;
Nothing wants beneath, above,
Resting in thy perfect love."

That your earthen vessels may be filled with this love till they break, and you enjoy the Divine object of your faith, without an interposing veil of gross flesh and blood, is the wish of one who sincerely praises God on your account, and ardently prays,—

"Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show
The glorious, spotless church below ;
The fellowship of saints make known ;
And O, my God, might I be one !

O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesus' witnesses !
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet !

To wait upon his saints below ;
On gospel errands for them go ;
Enjoy the grace to angels given,
And serve the royal heirs of heaven !"

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What direction is given in view of the possibility of apostasy ?</p> <p>2. In reference to the example of Christ ?</p> <p>3. A disposition to receive instruction ?</p> <p>4. Confounding angelical and Christian perfection ?</p> <p>5. Confidence and resignation in afflictions ?</p> <p>6. Humility ?</p> <p>7. Confessing ourselves sinners ?</p> <p>8. Bearing each other's burdens ?</p> | <p>9. Bigotry ?</p> <p>10. Desiring God alone ?</p> <p>11. Heavy crosses ?</p> <p>12. Continual employment ?</p> <p>13. Bearing testimony for Christ ?</p> <p>14. Acknowledging our Christian attainments ?</p> <p>15. Acknowledging our indebtedness to God ?</p> <p>16. Efforts still to "grow in grace ?"</p> |
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LECTURE XXXI.

THE RESURRECTION.

I. THE RESURRECTION of the human body from the dead is a doctrine depending entirely upon revelation for its support.

But before we examine the Scripture account of the subject, we would briefly notice a philosophical objection frequently urged against it. The captious infidel and the ingenious materialist have represented it as "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead." They have founded their objection upon the laws of matter, which, according to their showing, forbid the supposition that a decayed human body should again be raised to life. In reply to this objection, we would ask, what are the laws of matter which are supposed to present this insuperable obstacle? A *law*, considered in itself, is not an active agent, possessed of self-moving power. It can only be properly understood to imply the mode in which the actions of a self-moving agent are conducted. The *laws of matter* can only imply the mode in which the Divine power, which originally created the material universe, proceeds in its government and control. That these laws, thus considered, are profoundly mysterious, presenting at every step what is incomprehensible to the human intellect, none will deny. But this very fact should rather admonish us of the propriety of extreme cautiousness in asserting what is or is not forbidden by the laws in question. Before we can be prepared for assertions of so bold and sweeping a character, we should understand the nature of these mysterious principles more thoroughly than the most skilful philosopher dare pretend. Who can say that he comprehends the laws of matter? The wisest philosopher stumbles at the very threshold, and finds in the smallest spire of grass, or the most insignificant insect, mysteries too profound for his comprehension. How then can he be prepared for assertions so general and unqualified that they can only be safely based upon a thorough knowledge of the subject?

But suppose, for the sake of argument, we admit that the resurrection of the human body is contrary to the laws of matter as they now exist, might we not ask, who is the Author of those laws? And may not the same Divine Being who originally framed and constantly regulates

them, change or modify them at pleasure? Can it be sound philosophy to say, if the resurrection is a work attributed to God alone, that a law of his own framing, depending entirely upon his will for its existence, shall impede the exercise of his own wonder-working power, in the accomplishment of his purposes?

We are, however, far from admitting that this doctrine conflicts with the laws of matter. It is very true that, according to our experience and observation, the resurrection of the human body from the grave does not result from the regular operation of those laws. When dead human bodies are interred, we have not observed that new bodies arise from their ruins; but how can we certainly know that this necessarily results from an insuperable obstacle interposed by the laws of matter? From anything that we can see, it may be accounted for by referring it entirely to the will of God. Had the great Creator seen fit so to direct, the resurrection of the human body from the grave might have been as common an occurrence as that of death itself; and were such the fact, it would present no more difficulty to our minds than any other mysterious process of nature; and sceptical philosophy, so far from pronouncing it a deviation from the laws of matter, would view it as a necessary result of those laws.

In confirmation of the position here assumed, we appeal to the process of vegetation, and ask the candid mind to decide whether it does not present mysteries as great as are involved in the doctrine of the resurrection? From the decayed seed we see springing forth the plant, bearing even sixty or an hundred fold of similar seeds. If it be pronounced contrary to the laws of matter that one new body should come forth from one decayed body, would not the fair analogical inference be, that it is contrary to the laws of matter that one new seed should come forth from one decayed seed? But when we see many new seeds proceeding from a single decayed one, is not the seeming difficulty increased in proportion to the number of seeds? It is true that we have become so familiar with the process of vegetation that we are but slightly impressed with the difficulty which it involves. I think, however, we may safely affirm, that if the resurrection of the human body were as common as the process of vegetation, and the latter as unprecedented as the former, the same philosophy which pronounces the resurrection of the human body inconsistent with the laws of matter, would then, with equal if not greater show of reason, make a similar declaration in reference to the process of vegetation. Hence, the argument against the resurrection, as it bears with equal force against an every-day process of nature, is seen to be fallacious.

The resurrection of the body has been further opposed from the

assumed changes which take place in its substance during life. To this we reply, that, admitting the supposition of these changes to be correct, they present no difficulty in the way of the resurrection; for the proper personal sameness of the body, through the successive stages of human life, is still preserved. The man is the same, so far as personal identity is concerned, in infancy and at death. If personal identity be not preserved amid all these supposed changes, the common forms of speech, our own consciousness, and the civil jurisprudence of all countries, are calculated to mislead; for they all contemplate each individual as continuing the same person through every period of life. But, were we to admit that these changes destroy the personal identity of the body, the doctrine of the resurrection could not be affected thereby; for it is predicated of the same body which is laid in the grave.

Once more; the resurrection of the body has been objected to because of the difficulty implied in the fact that its decayed substance may enter into the composition of vegetable matter, which, being received as food, may pass into the substance of other bodies; and thus present a commingling of the substance of bodies. We reply to this by saying, that if, as we have already seen, the change and commingling of the substance of bodies cannot destroy their sameness during life, why cannot the same Divine Power still be exercised over the scattered fragments after death, so that everything essential to their identity shall still be preserved? In a word, we may say that the entire argument against the resurrection, based upon philosophical difficulties, is sufficiently answered by an appeal to the infinite power of God, to the exercise of which the resurrection is attributed.

II. We proceed, next, to the consideration of the resurrection as presented in Scripture.

It has been thought by some that the resurrection of the body is a doctrine peculiar to the New Testament; but this is certainly not correct. It is true that we there find the doctrine more clearly and fully presented, and witness its practical exemplification in the resurrection of Christ; but whoever will carefully examine the Old Testament on the subject, may easily perceive, that, although the "Sadducees denied that there is a resurrection of the dead," yet the ancient prophets and saints were animated by the glorious hope it inspires.

That, amid his deep affliction, holy Job was comforted by this pleasing doctrine, we learn from the following exclamation: — "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

In Isaiah xxvi. 19, that evangelical prophet speaks in the following animated strain:—"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

In Daniel xii. 2, we read:—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

These passages from the Old Testament are sufficient to show that the saints of God, under the former comparatively dark dispensation, guided by inspiration, looked beyond this vale of tears to the unfolding glories of the resurrection morn.

We proceed, in the next place, to that more complete exhibition of the doctrine contained in the New Testament.

In Matt. xxii. 23, 32, we are presented with an account of the "Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection," coming to Jesus, and questioning him on the subject. In his answer are the following words:—"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." These words are quoted from Exodus iii. 6, 16, and were spoken three hundred years after the death of Abraham; and, as our Lord declares, they were spoken "touching the resurrection of the dead." In John v. 28, 29, we read, "Marvel not at this," &c.

In Phil. iii. 20, 21, we read these words:—"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." In 1 Thess. iv. 14—18, we read:—"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." In Rev. xx. 12, 13, we read:—"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the

books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

In 1 Cor. xv. 12, we have the doctrine of the resurrection argued and illustrated at length, and the resurrection of Christ appealed to by the apostle, in confirmation of the same. As this is the most direct discussion of the subject contained in the Scriptures, we present it entire, from the 12th verse to the end of the chapter, as follows:—

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sow-

est, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain ; it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain : but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh ; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

III. Having thus presented the Scripture proof of the doctrine, we now would consider a few things, more particularly, concerning what it implies.

1. It implies, not an original creation of new bodies, but a *resuscitation of the same bodies that are laid in the grave*.

This much is implied in the very term *resurrection*. In the language of St. Paul, these same "vile bodies" which we now inhabit are to be

"changed." It is that body which is "sown in corruption," that is to be "raised in incorruption."

2. They are to be *spiritual*. This, the apostle has expressly declared ; but what shall be the peculiar properties of those "spiritual" bodies, distinguishing them from gross matter, and from the immaterial essence which is to dwell within them, is placed beyond our reach. In this respect, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." This much, however, is clear ; they will be free from weariness, pain, and death. The inhabitants of that land shall never say, "we are sick." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away."

3. The risen bodies of the saints shall resemble the glorified body of our Lord. St. Paul says, "They shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body." And St. John asserts, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Perhaps the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor was designed to impart a faint idea concerning the glorious character of the resurrection body. St. Matthew says, "He was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." So overwhelming was the impression on the minds of the apostles, that they seemed, for the time, to be unconscious that they were in the body, or belonged to this lower world. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." How transcendently glorious must have been the body of our Lord, when the apostles were so transported by its effulgence as to forget that they were still pilgrims of earth, and inhabitants of tabernacles of clay ! And yet, here was presented but a faint adumbration of that glorified body, before which angels are now, in deep admiration, veiling their faces, and "like unto" which the bodies of the risen saints are to "be fashioned." Well might St. Paul, in speaking on this subject, exclaim, "Behold, I show you a mystery." Yes ! it is a mystery, sufficient to fill even heaven itself with amazement, that these frail bodies should be exalted to such celestial glory.

4. But *there is to be a resurrection "both of the just and of the unjust."* Some are to be raised "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But while we are furnished with intimations so bright, in reference to the bodies of the saints, a cloud, dark as midnight, is left upon the bodies of the wicked. We may reasonably infer, that they will be as horrible in their appearance as sin and guilt can render them.

5. Again; *the resurrection is to be universal*. All the human family that have lived and died, from Adam to his youngest son. How vast, therefore, will be the assemblage! "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," all, from the earth and from the sea, from Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and from the scattered isles that spot the ocean, of every people, language, and character, shall then come forth to life. While the dead, in countless millions, shall leave their earthly sepulchre or watery grave, the living "shall be changed," and all "shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air."

6. Once more, as *to the time of the resurrection*. Some have supposed, from the 20th chapter of Revelations, that the martyrs are to be raised "a thousand years" before "the rest of the dead;" but the more probable opinion is, that the resurrection there spoken of is figurative; — that the martyrs are to be raised in the holy lives and burning zeal of the living saints, in the same sense in which the holy Elijah was raised in the person of John the Baptist. The general tenor of Scripture on this subject seems to indicate that all the dead shall be raised at the same time; or, at least, with no considerable interval of time between. The apostle speaks of the resurrection in general as taking place "at the sound of the trump." Martha said to the Saviour, in reference to her brother Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection, at the last day." From these, and other passages, we conclude, that the resurrection of the whole human family shall take place "at the end of the world." But how long the world is to stand, is known to God alone. "At such an hour as we look not, the Son of man shall come."

7. We close this lecture, by presenting the doctrine of the resurrection as *a ground of encouraging hope to the Christian*. That a glorious resurrection, and a blissful immortality, animated the hopes of the Old Testament saints, is testified by St. Paul, in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews. In reference to Abraham, he says, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of Moses he says, "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Who can read the history of the ancient worthies, as detailed in the Old Testament, or as commented on by St. Paul in the chapter above named, and believe that their hopes were limited to the present world? "If in this life only they had hope," how can we account for their perseverance amid persecution and affliction? They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." And

what, we may ask, encouraged and animated their souls? Surely, nothing on this side the grave. Their faith pierced the vista of futurity. It rose above the world, and fastened upon a "better inheritance" in the celestial Canaan.

But when we open the New Testament, and read the history of the apostles and first Christians, we find the resurrection of the dead their constant inspiring theme. They "preached Jesus and the resurrection," as the ground of their own consolation, and the only hope of a ruined world. Sustained and comforted by this doctrine, "they counted not their own lives dear unto them," but, with undaunted heroism, faced the frowns and scoffs of an ungodly world; and many of them fell martyrs to the holy cause. From the apostles' days to the present time, in all the successive ages of the church, this glorious doctrine has animated the Christian's heart in the darkest hour of his pilgrimage, and in the extremity of death enabled him to shout, "O! death, where is thy sting? O! grave, where is thy victory?"

In conclusion we would ask, what brighter hope can we, as Christians, desire, than this doctrine inspires? It lifts to our believing eyes the veil of futurity: it lights up the smile of joy on the lip of death: it pours a heavenly radiance on the dark and lonely tomb: and, in accents sweet as angelic voices can pronounce, whispers in the ear of the disconsolate mourner, as he closes the eyes, or follows to the grave the pale remains of the most beloved one on earth, "Thy brother shall rise again!" Erase the pleasing hope of the resurrection from the Christian's heart, and you blot the sun from the moral firmament, and darkness, thick, impenetrable darkness, enshrouds the life, and settles upon the tomb. But let this hope bloom in the freshness of immortality in the believer's soul, and he can smile amid the storms of life, triumph in the hour of dissolution, and sing, with Wesley,—

"Stand the omnipotent decree!
 Jehovah's will be done!
 Nature's end we wait to see,
 Or hear her final groan;
 Let this earth dissolve, and blend
 In death the wicked and the just;
 Let those ponderous orbs descend,
 And grind us into dust.

Rests secure the righteous man,
 At his Redeemer's beck
 Sure to emerge and rise again,
 And mount above the wreck:

Lo ! the heavenly spirit towers,
 Like flames o'er nature's funeral pyre,
 Triumphs in immortal powers,
 And claps her wings of fire !

Nothing hath the just to lose
 By worlds on worlds destroyed ;
 Far beneath his feet he views,
 With smiles, the flaming void ;
 Sees this universe renewed,
 The grand millennial reign begun ;
 Shouts with all the sons of God,
 Around the eternal throne !

Resting in this glorious hope,
 To be at last restored,
 Yield we now our bodies up
 To earthquake, plague, or sword :
 Listening for the call divine,
 The latest trumpet of the seven,
 Soon our soul and dust shall join,
 And both fly up to heaven."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXXI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. On what does the doctrine of the resurrection depend for its support ?</p> <p>2. What philosophical objection is made to it ?</p> <p>3. What is the reply ?</p> <p>4. What Scripture proofs are brought from the Old Testament ?</p> <p>5. What from the New Testament ?</p> <p>6. How is it proved that the same body laid in the grave is to be raised ?</p> <p>7. What is implied in the <i>spirituality</i> of the resurrection body ?</p> <p>8. What is said of its resemblance to the glorified body of our Lord ?</p> | <p>9. How is it shown that both the <i>just</i> and the <i>unjust</i> shall be raised ; and what is said of the bodies of the latter ?</p> <p>10. Are the whole human family to be raised ?</p> <p>11. Are all to be raised at the same time ?</p> <p>12. What is the proof ?</p> <p>13. How is it shown that this doctrine encouraged the hopes of the Old Testament saints ?</p> <p>14. How is it shown that it animated the apostles and first Christians ?</p> <p>15. What should be its influence on Christians in all ages ?</p> <p>16. What would be the effect if the doctrine were renounced ?</p> |
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LECTURE XXXII.

THE FUTURE STATE, GENERAL JUDGMENT, &c.

HAVING, in the preceding lecture, treated of the resurrection of the human body, we now propose to consider *the doctrine of A FUTURE STATE, connected with the GENERAL JUDGMENT, as presented in the Holy Scriptures.*

Are we, as conscious beings, to survive the ravages of death? And if so, what will be the character of our future destiny? These are questions of vast importance and deep interest. They lie at the foundation of all religion, and have engaged the most serious consideration of the wisest and the best of mankind in every age.

A firm belief in the doctrine of a hereafter inspires the mind with a deep sense of the dignity and importance of our nature, and is the most powerful incentive to the practice of moral and religious duty.

For the establishment and illustration of this doctrine, the main reliance of the Christian is on the teachings of inspiration.

The advocates of the doctrine of a future state have, nevertheless, considered the presumptive evidence afforded by the light of nature upon this subject of too much importance to be overlooked. We therefore deem it proper, before we appeal directly to the Scriptures, briefly to notice some of the corroborative testimony derived from other sources.

From our own consciousness we learn that man is not only possessed of a body, or material part, but of a soul, or immaterial part. We derive our knowledge of material things through the medium of sensation, and of immaterial things through the medium of consciousness. Of the essence of matter and of mind we are alike ignorant. All we know of them is what we learn of their properties through the mediums just named. By the exercise of external sensation, we know that we have bodies, or a substantive, material nature, possessing certain properties, such as *divisibility, figure, inertia, &c.* Of the existence of these properties the constitution of our nature will not allow us to doubt; for the evidence is direct through our own senses. Thus, by the senses of sight and touch, we know that we have a material nature, susceptible of division, and possessing a certain figure; and we know that wherever there is division or figure, there must be something divided or figured. How-

ever ignorant, therefore, we may be of the essence of that substance, we cannot doubt its existence.

By an analogous process we arrive at a knowledge of the existence of our *souls*, or the immaterial part of our nature. What sensation is to the body, consciousness is to the soul. By an exercise of consciousness we know that we are possessed of souls, or an immaterial nature, endued with certain properties or faculties, such as *understanding, memory, will, affections*, &c. Of the existence of these faculties the constitution of our nature will not allow us to doubt; for the evidence is direct through our own consciousness. Thus, we reason, remember, choose, love, &c.; and, therefore, know there must be something which reasons, remembers, chooses, loves, &c. However ignorant we may be of the essence of that substance, we cannot doubt its existence. That substance, a knowledge of which is thus gained, is what we mean by the *soul*. Thus, we think it clear, that to doubt the existence of the soul is as unphilosophical as to doubt the existence of the body. To doubt, in either case, is to yield ourselves up to the absurdities of universal scepticism, and assume an attitude of hostility to both revelation and common sense.

We now proceed to examine the question,—Are we, as conscious beings, to survive the ravages of death? Or, in other words, Is the soul immortal? Or, is our entire history bounded by the narrow horizon of the present world?

I. Our first argument on this subject, derived from the light of nature and reason, is, *that the doctrine of immortality has been universally believed, especially by the best informed of mankind in all ages.*

An examination of accredited history clearly shows that the united voice of the ancient nations is in favor of this doctrine. It was acknowledged by the Egyptians, the Phenicians, the Persians, the Scythians, the Assyrians, the Celts, and the Druids, as well as the Greeks and the Romans. Indeed, there is not an ancient nation or tribe of which history furnishes an account, which did not, with greater or less clearness, believe in a future state. It is admitted that the notions of many of them were very obscure and unsatisfactory, embracing much that was ridiculous or absurd; but still, though “shadows, clouds, and darkness” rested upon their minds, their hopes penetrated the gloomy future, giving evidence of an internal consciousness of the insufficiency of the present world to satisfy the ardent aspirations of their souls.

Now, the strong presumption is, that this general belief in the doctrine of immortality had its origin in truth. Unless we admit, either that it was first communicated by direct revelation, and disseminated among all nations by tradition, or that the Divine Being has, in some

way, strongly impressed this belief on the very constitution of our nature, it will be difficult to account for its universal prevalence in all ages.

II. Another argument in favor of the immortality of our nature is based upon *the vast powers of the human soul*.

The utmost capacity of the human intellect has never yet been exhibited. The shortness of human life, together with the innumerable hindrances with which the most highly favored must necessarily contend, in their intellectual pursuits, has ever precluded the possibility of testing, by example, what the human intellect, under more favorable circumstances, might accomplish. Yet the achievements of mind, in the various departments of knowledge, have been truly astonishing. The deep mysteries of nature have been explored. The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms have passed under philosophic review. The penetrating genius of a Locke has scanned the powers of the human intellect, and described the laws of mind, in so clear and forcible a manner as to secure to himself immortal fame. The capacious intellect of a Bacon has surveyed the entire circle of human science, and marked the appropriate line of intellectual pursuit for succeeding generations. Nor has the research been confined to the globe we inhabit. The towering mind of a Newton has soared from world to world, estimated the magnitudes and distances of those immense orbs, and expatiated upon the laws which bind them together and guide them in their harmonious revolutions. We would ask, is it reasonable to suppose that the infinitely wise Creator has produced a race of beings possessed of powers so capacious, for no better purpose than to open their eyes for a few brief years on this earthly stage, and then, like the short-lived flowers to wither and die forever? The hypothesis is derogatory to the character of the all-wise Creator.

III. Our next argument on this subject is based upon *the ardent desire of the human soul for an immortal existence and a continued advancement in knowledge*.

This desire is found to exist among all classes, and among all nations. To live forever, appears to be a boon for which the soul instinctively pants. It is, therefore, said by the poet:—

“ Who would lose, though full of pain,
This intellectual being; these thoughts that
Wander through eternity?”

This desire for immortality may be seen in the zeal and energy with which fame and distinction are pursued in this life. With immense labor and pains, some are erecting their castles, as though they desired

to dwell upon earth forever; while others are rearing their monuments, as though they desired that their names should be remembered "as long as the sun and moon endure."

The thirst for a continued pursuit of knowledge appears to be universal. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing." The mind is ever on the stretch for knowledge. It would grasp every object, and explore every field, within its extensive range. Nature and Revelation, man, angels, and even God himself, are objects which the active energies of the human intellect would contemplate and comprehend. But who, in this intellectual pursuit, has reached the desired goal? Who has been so perfectly satisfied with his attainments as to be willing to desist from the pursuit, without sending forth an ardent desire for a more thorough acquaintance with the subjects of which he feels that he has gained so imperfect a view? From the "Pierian spring," each draught, instead of diminishing, increases the thirst for more. Whence this "longing after immortality,"—this thirst for an increase of knowledge? Unless we admit that the Creator has impressed it on the constitution of our nature, how can we account for this ardent desire? And how can we make that admission unless we believe that the Deity intended that this desire should be gratified? Surely, a God of infinite wisdom and benevolence has not originated these pleasing hopes merely to be ended in disappointment.

IV. Our next argument in favor of the future state is founded upon *the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life*. A glance at the history of the world, and a little attention to the state of things around us, will evince that rewards and punishments are not meted out in the present state in exact accordance with the actions of individuals. How frequently have the wicked and abominable been permitted to pass unpunished! The tyrant, while crushing thousands of the innocent and unoffending beneath his iron foot of power, has feasted upon the richest luxuries of life, and drank to satiety at every fount of worldly pleasure. The proud and the licentious, the avaricious and the cruel, have too frequently occupied the high places of the earth, and escaped in this life the punishment due to their crimes. On the other hand, those celebrated for virtue and piety have often been the most afflicted of our race. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was sorely tried. Moses, the meek servant of God, met the scoffs and reproaches of his ungodly countrymen, and "endured as seeing him who is invisible." Job and Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah, the apostles and martyrs;—in a word, the good of every age have generally been called in this life to pass through the furnace of affliction. For their "work of patience and labor of love," an ungrateful world has requited them with bonds,

imprisonment, tortures, and death. But justice will not forever sleep. The wicked will not always escape; nor the righteous go forever unrewarded. A future state is necessary to rectify these disorders, and to exhibit to an intelligent universe that he who reigns over all is a God of justice.

Thus have we endeavored to prove the doctrine of a future state by an appeal to the universal belief of the best informed of mankind in all ages,—to the vast powers of the human soul,—to the ardent desire of the human soul for an immortal existence, and a continued advancement in knowledge,—and to the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life.

We might proceed, also, to argue from *the perpetual progress of the mind toward perfection*, from *the moral powers of man*, from *the fearful apprehensions and forebodings of the wicked*, and from *the dreadful consequences which would result from a rejection of this doctrine*; but we deem it useless to detain longer with arguments from the light of nature, when we may go directly to the superior and more convincing light of revelation.

In presenting the *evidence of Scripture* in favor of the doctrine of immortality, we would remark, that this is one of those leading and important doctrines which finds its support on every page of the Bible. In fact, to discard the doctrine of immortality, no part of the Scriptures can be understood. The whole volume will be an unintelligible enigma. To such as believe in the truth of the Bible, a few of the many quotations which might be made, of a direct and pointed character, will be as satisfactory as a repetition of a great number of texts; therefore we shall be very brief.

1. All those passages which prove the resurrection of the body imply also the future conscious state of the soul. As these texts have been quoted in the preceding lecture, we will not here repeat them.

2. Those passages in which the prophets speak of their expectations of a future life, and the consolation which that hope inspired.

Thus David says:—"As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "My flesh shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and *I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*" "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and *afterward receive me to glory.*" We read in the Book of Daniel, "They that be wise shall shine as the

brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

3. Those passages in the New Testament containing promises of eternal life to the righteous. Thus, our Saviour declares, in reference to his servants: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there you may be also."

4. Those passages in which the apostles express their hopes of future bliss. Thus, St. Paul declares:—"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Again, St. Peter speaks of the inheritance of the righteous as "incorruptible, undefiled, and that *fadeth not away*."

We would inquire, in the next place, *when shall the righteous enter upon this state of future blessedness; and through what stages do they pass?*—On this subject we remark, that the souls of the righteous, at the death of the body, enter immediately into a state of happiness. On this point, we quote from Dr. Campbell, of Scotland, the following satisfactory remarks:

"Many expressions of Scripture, in the natural and obvious sense, imply that an intermediate and separate state of the soul is actually to succeed death. Such are the words of the Lord to the penitent thief upon the cross. Luke xxiii. 43. Stephen's dying petition. Acts vii. 59. The comparisons which the apostle Paul makes in different places, (2 Cor. v. 6, &c.; Phil. i. 21,) between the enjoyment which true Christians can attain by their continuance in this world, and that which they enter on at their departure out of it, and several other passages. Let the words referred to be read by any judicious person, either in the original or in the common translation, which is sufficiently exact for this purpose, and let him, setting aside all theory or system, say candidly whether they would not be understood by the gross of mankind as presupposing that the soul may exist separately from the body, and be susceptible of happiness or misery in that state. If anything could add to the native evidence of the expressions, it would be the unnatural meanings that are put upon them, in order to disguise that evidence. What shall we say of the metaphysical distinction introduced for this purpose between abso-

lute and relative time? The apostle Paul, they are sensible, speaks of the saints as admitted to enjoyment in the presence of God immediately after death. Now, to palliate the direct contradiction there is in this to their doctrine, that the vital principle, which is all they mean by the soul, remains extinguished between death and the resurrection, they remind us of the difference there is between absolute or real, and relative or apparent, time. They admit, that, if the apostle be understood as speaking of real time, what is said flatly contradicts their system; but, say they, his words must be interpreted as spoken only of apparent time. He talks, indeed, of entering on a state of enjoyment immediately after death, though there may be thousands of years between the one and the other; for he means only, that, when that state shall commence, however distant, in reality, the time may be, the person entering upon it will not be sensible of that distance, and consequently there will be to him an apparent coincidence with the moment of his death. But does the apostle anywhere give a hint that this is his meaning? or is it what any man would naturally discover from his words? That it is exceedingly remote from the common use of language, I believe hardly any of those who favor this scheme will be partial enough to deny. Did the sacred penmen then mean to put a cheat upon the world, and by the help of an equivocal expression, to flatter men with the hope of entering, the instant they expire, on a state of felicity, when, in fact, they knew that it would be many ages before it would take place? But were the hypothesis about the extinction of the mind between death and the resurrection well founded, the apparent coincidence they speak of is not so clear as they seem to think it. For my part, I cannot regard it as an axiom, and I never heard of any who attempted to demonstrate it. To me it appears merely a corollary from Mr. Locke's doctrine, which derives our conceptions of time from the succession of our ideas, which, whether true or false, is a doctrine to be found only among certain philosophers, and which, we may reasonably believe, never came into the heads of those to whom the gospel, in the apostolic age, was announced."

"I remark, that even the curious equivocations (or, perhaps, more properly, mental reservation) that have been devised for them, will not in every case save the credit of apostolical veracity. The words of Paul to the Corinthians are, *knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord; again, we are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.* Could such expressions have been used by him, if he had held it impossible to be with the Lord, or, indeed, anywhere without the body; and that, whatever the change was which was made by death, he could not be in the presence of the Lord till he

returned to the body? Absence from the body and presence with the Lord were never, therefore, more unfortunately combined than in this illustration. Things are combined here as coincident, which, on the hypothesis of those gentlemen, are incompatible. If recourse be had to the original, the expressions in Greek are if possible still stronger. They are, *οἱ ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι*, *those who dwell in the body*, who are *ἐκδημοῦντες ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου*, *at a distance from the Lord*; as, on the contrary they are *οἱ ἐκδημοῦντες ἐκ τοῦ σώματος*, *those who have travelled out of the body*, who are *οἱ ἐνδημοῦντες πρὸς τὸν Κύριον*, *those who reside, or are present with the Lord*. In the passage to the Philippians also, the commencement of his presence with the Lord is represented as coincident, not with his return to the body, but with his leaving it; with the dissolution, not with the restoration, of the union.

“From the tenor of the New Testament, the sacred writers appear to proceed on the supposition that the soul and the body are naturally distinct and separable, and that the soul is susceptible of pain or pleasure in a state of separation. It were endless to enumerate all the places which evince this. The story of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 22, 23. The last words of our Lord upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 46, and of Stephen, when dying. Paul’s doubts whether he was in the body or out of the body when he was translated to the third heaven and paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4. Our Lord’s words to Thomas, to satisfy him that he was not a spirit, Luke xxiv. 39. And, to conclude, the express mention of the denial of spirits as one of the errors of the Sadducees, Acts xxiii. 8. For the Sadducees say *there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit*, *μηδε αγγελον μηδε πνευμα*. All these are irrefragable evidences of the general opinion on this subject of both Jews and Christians. By *spirit*, as distinguished from *angel*, is evidently meant the departed spirit of a human being; for, that man is here, before his natural death, possessed of a vital and intelligent principle, which is commonly called his soul or spirit, it was never pretended that they denied.” (Diss. 6, Part 2.)

In further contemplating the future state as exhibited in Scripture, we would notice *the doctrine of the general judgment*.

This is one of the most solemn and deeply interesting subjects presented in the Book of God. That there will be a day in which “the world shall be judged in righteousness, by the man Christ Jesus,” is admitted by all believers in revelation. But this solemn theme is too seldom the subject of serious thought. Many, if they reflect on the subject at all, view it as a matter so immensely distant from them that it fails to impress their minds with that deep solemnity which its importance should inspire.

1. That there will be a general judgment, the following Scriptures declare:—Psalm l. 1, 4. Eccl. xi. 9. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. xiv. 10. Heb. ix. 27. Jude 14, 15. Rev. xx. 11, 15. Rev. 22. 12.

2. As to *the time of the general judgment, the Scriptures seem evidently to place it at the end of the world, immediately subsequent to the resurrection.*

It may be asked, why should the judgment be deferred till the end of the world? Why might not each individual receive his final sentence at death, and enter at once on his eternal destiny?

To this it might be enough to reply, that the all-wise Judge has not so ordered it. But if we may be allowed to infer, from apparent fitness, the reasons of the Divine conduct, we think there are several considerations which indicate the propriety of placing the judgment at the end of the world.

(1.) *It will promote the declarative glory of God.* In the presence of an assembled universe, it will then be shown that “the Judge of all the earth will do right.” The sentence of the Judge, whether for acquittal or condemnation, will then be sanctioned by the countless millions of angels and redeemed spirits.

The fact that the influence of human actions extends beyond the present life of the individual indicates the propriety of deferring the judgment till earthly things shall be no more. The example of the good “lives after them.” The influence of the example and writings of such men as St. Paul, Luther, Wesley, Doddridge, &c., will still continue to bless the world to the latest generation. On the other hand, the influence of the example and writings of the wicked still remains to curse the world through successive generations. The pernicious writings of Hume, Bolingbroke, and Volney, are still in the world, exerting their influence over the destinies of immortal souls. It is reasonable, therefore, that the judgment be deferred till the end of the world. Then the entire actual influence of each individual can be more fully exhibited in the view of an intelligent universe, that all may witness that every man shall be rewarded “according as his work shall be.”

We inquire, in the last place, *what is the design of the general judgment?* We reply, it is to promote the declarative glory of God, by fixing the eternal destinies of men and angels after a public and complete exhibition of the conduct of each, thereby constraining an assembled universe to acknowledge the justice and propriety of the Divine administration. This is most explicitly declared in many places in the Bible. We need only refer to the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, in which our Lord gives an account of the final sentence of both the righteous and the wicked. Unto the former, the Judge shall say, “Come ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But unto the latter, he shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It is added, that the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

On this subject, we would not pass unnoticed a question on which there has been much controversy; it is this,—*Will the punishment of the wicked be eternal?* The entire body of orthodox Christians, with united voice, have answered this question in the affirmative; while a fragment of pseudo-believers in the truth of revelation have contended that all men will ultimately be admitted into the enjoyment of happiness. The advocates of this theory are denominated Universalists. Many who are also regarded as Socinians or Unitarians may properly be classed with Universalists on this question. The entire class of Universalists are, however, properly embraced in two divisions:—1. Those who contend that all punishment is restricted to this life. 2. Those who admit that the wicked will be punished in a future state for a limited time, but contend that they will ultimately be restored to holiness and bliss. A theory which, like this, so obviously contradicts the general analogy and tenor of Scripture, need not here be extensively considered. A brief reference to what we view as the satisfactory and unanswerable arguments against Universalism in its diversified phases, is all we shall attempt.

1. *There are numerous plain passages of Scripture, which speak of the punishment of the wicked as endless*,—of which, we refer to the following: Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41, 46; Mark ix. 43; Rev. xiv. 11; 2 Thess. i. 9; Jude 13; Rev. xx. 10; Matt. xii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 10; Mark iii. 29; 1 John v. 16; Matt. xxvi. 24. From these texts, we think it will appear that the *eternity* of the punishment of the wicked is as clearly proved as the *eternity* of the happiness of the righteous. In the last verse of the 25th chapter of Matt., the same term in the Greek (*αιωνιον*) is used in reference to the duration of the reward of the one and the punishment of the other. If, therefore, we suppose a termination to the misery of the wicked, we may, with equal propriety, suppose a termination to the happiness of the righteous. We know it is contended that the terms rendered "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," and "forever and ever," are used in Scripture in reference to limited duration. But, we reply, that, in all such cases, the context renders the limited sense so apparent that there can be no danger of misapprehension; but in reference to the future punishment of the wicked, the context, with the entire tenor of Scripture, is obviously against the limited construction.

2. *The Scriptures plainly teach that all who are saved must be saved through the mediatorial interposition of Christ.* But the mediatorial reign shall terminate at the close of the general judgment; therefore, all who are not then saved must perish everlastingly.

3. *The Scriptures clearly set forth that salvation is conditional.* This most conclusively proves the eternity of future punishment. The Bible presents no hope of salvation to any to whom the gospel is addressed, except on the condition of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Since, therefore, no prospect is offered for repentance and faith beyond the present life, it irresistibly follows, that all who die impenitent and unbelieving are left in a state of utter hopelessness. They have denied "the only name given under heaven amongst men whereby they might have been saved." They have rejected the only "sacrifice for sin;" consequently, there is nothing left them, even by the decree of a merciful God, "but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

As to the *nature* or *degree* of future torment, we would remark, that, according to the Scriptures, it will be intense beyond the power of language to express. In its description, the strongest possible figures are used. Such as,—*"unquenchable fire," "the worm that never dieth," "weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth," &c.*

We will conclude by briefly noticing the future state of the righteous. Our most exalted conceptions of that felicity which awaits the people of God beyond the boundaries of time must be faint and inadequate. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." In reference to this subject, the pen of inspiration has used language the most glowing and impressive; yet, the most vivid descriptions and the most sublime metaphors of Holy Writ, we may be well assured, are but feeble adumbrations of the ecstatic glories of the heavenly state.

1. *Heaven is represented as a GLORIOUS HABITATION.* Some have supposed that the heavenly "mansions," spoken of in Scripture as the future home of the redeemed, refer not to a located place, but are merely intended to denote a *state* of blessedness. This hypothesis, however, is contrary to the *prima facie* evidence of Scripture. The whole tenor of the Bible speaks of heaven, not only as a *state*, but also as a *place*. Angels are represented as descending from heaven to earth, and ascending again to heaven. The Son of Man is said to have "come from heaven" to our world, and again to have "ascended into heaven, where he was before." Such expressions as the above, with which the Bible is

replete, can only be consistently interpreted upon the supposition that heaven is a *located place*.

Again; that heaven is a *place* as well as a *state*, is demonstrated by the fact that it is now the abode of the glorified humanity of our Saviour, and will ultimately contain the risen bodies of all the saints. It is impossible for us to form any conception of a *body*, however refined, without locating it in some portion of space. That which is composed of a body cannot be omnipresent, and that which is not omnipresent must exist in a particular located place. Hence it follows, as the bodies of all the redeemed are to be assembled together in company with the glorified body of our Lord, "that where he is, there they may be also," that the heavenly mansion in which they are thus to be assembled must be a located place. Again; heaven is not only represented as a place, but also a glorious place. It is called a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In the book of Revelation it is called "the holy city, new Jerusalem," and "the tabernacle of God." Its "foundations" are said to be "garnished with all manner of precious stones;" its "wall is of jasper;" its "gates are of pearls;" and its street is "pure gold," transparent as glass. There is "no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." It has "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Such are some of the sublime descriptions furnished in Scripture of the eternal abode of the righteous.

2. *The heavenly state implies a deliverance from ignorance.* We are not, however, to understand that "the saints in light" are to be absolutely perfect in knowledge. This belongs to God alone. But they shall not be conscious of any such defect in knowledge as would interrupt their happiness. And we believe that the pursuit of knowledge, unimpeded by the clogs of mortality, will constitute a part of the employment of the "spirits of the just made perfect." This, we think, is more than intimated by the apostle, when he says, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." From this language, we gather the pleasing hope, that when the last accession of truth is made here on earth, we are not to die and leave it all behind; but it shall accompany us to the future world; and when the pursuit has been dropped here, for the want of time or ability to conduct it further, it shall be resumed there with renewed and immortalized powers; where the body shall not weary, nor the powers of the mind wax feeble, but where all our faculties shall bloom in the freshness of immortal youth, and ripen forever under the beams of the heavenly countenance.

3. The righteous, in the heavenly state, will be delivered from all sin. Nothing unholy can enter there to disturb their peace. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." Job iii. 17. Into that city, it is said, Rev. xxi. 27, "There shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

4. *In the heavenly state there will be no suffering or death.* In Isa. xxxv. 10, we read, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Again; in reference to the redeemed multitudes, it is written, Rev. vii. 14, 17, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. xxi. 3, 4. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

We have only glanced at a few of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, in reference to the future happiness of the saints. But how little do we know upon that subject! That it is a state of bliss beyond the power of language to describe, none can doubt. The Bible, as we have seen, uses the most striking figures, the most glowing language, in reference to the future state of the righteous, but, at the same time, most clearly intimates that the subject is "too wonderful" for our feeble powers of mind to conceive. For the encouragement of our faith and hope, we may, however, be assured of this,—that when "death shall be swallowed up of life," the saints shall be possessed of all that is essential to their happiness. They shall dwell where there are "pleasures for evermore." Free from sorrow and death, they shall mingle with the celestial throng around the throne of the Eternal; and while the pure light of heaven shall pour upon their immortal intellects, they shall study the sublime mysteries of Providence and of grace; and kindle with holy rapture, as they contemplate the unfolding perfections of Him who is "all and in all."

"There shall they muse amid the starry glow,
Or hear the fiery streams of glory flow ;
Or, on the living cars of lightning driven,
Triumphant, wheel around the plains of heaven."

QUESTIONS ON LECTURE XXXII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. On what does the Christian mainly rely in proof of a future state ?</p> <p>2. How may the <i>existence</i> of the soul be proved ?</p> <p>3. What is the first proof of a future state presented as derived from the light of nature ?</p> <p>4. The second ?</p> <p>5. The third ?</p> <p>6. The fourth ?</p> <p>7. What other arguments might be added ?</p> <p>8. What is the first class of Scriptures in proof of this doctrine ?</p> <p>9. The second ?</p> <p>10. The third ?</p> <p>11. The fourth ?</p> <p>12. What is the proof of the intermediate state ?</p> | <p>13. What Scriptures prove that there will be a general judgment ?</p> <p>14. Why does it appear proper that the judgment should be deferred till the end of the world ?</p> <p>15. What is the design of the general judgment ?</p> <p>16. What Scripture is referred to on this subject ?</p> <p>17. What two classes of Universalists are specified ?</p> <p>18. How is the <i>eternity</i> of future punishment proved ?</p> <p>19. What is said of its <i>nature</i> ?</p> <p>20. What proof is given that the righteous will be delivered from ignorance ?</p> <p>21. That they will be freed from suffering ?</p> <p>22. What is said of their society and employment ?</p> |
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THE END.

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